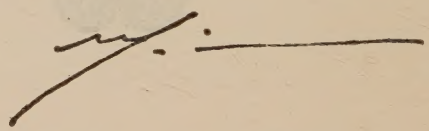
The Advent

The Divine may very well lean down towards you, but to understand him rightly you must come up to him.



The ADVENT

November 1950

CONTENTS

		Page
EDITORIAL:	— *Nolini Kanta Gupta*	
SWEET ADVERSITY	...	211
THE SOUL IN ANGUISH	...	212
SARTRIAN FREEDOM	...	215
A MODERNIST MENTALITY	...	216
SAVITRI, BOOK IV, CANTO III	— *Sri Aurobindo*	219
LETTERS OF SRI AUROBINDO	— *Sri Aurobindo*	226
THE GODWARD EMOTIONS	— *Sri Aurobindo*	228
THE SPIRITUAL BASIS OF PERSONALITY (II)	— *N. Pearson*	236
THE MOTHER ON YOGIC ACTION (IV)	— *Rishabhchand*	243
THE MOTHER'S MESSAGE OF 15th AUG., 50	— *Rishabhchand*	250
THE PSYCHOLOGY OF POETIC GENIUS	— *Jagdish Saran*	253
THE GURU IN SPIRITUAL LIFE	— *M. Pandit*	259
A VISIT TO SRI AUROBINDO ASHRAM	— *André*	264
REVIEWS		266

For in the march of all-fulfilling Time
The hour must come of the Transcendent's Will:
All turns and winds towards his predestined ends
In Nature's fixed inevitable course
Decreed since the beginning of the worlds
In the deep essence of created things:
Even there shall come as a high crown of all
The end of Death, the death of Ignorance.

SRI AUROBINDO

(*Savitri,* THE BOOK OF EVERLASTING DAY, CANTO 1)

Vol. VII. No. 4 November 1950

THE ADVENT

The Divine gives itself to those who give themselves without reserve and in all their parts to the Divine. For them the calm, the light, the power, the bliss, the freedom, the wideness, the heights of knowledge, the seas of Ananda. - - - - *Sri Aurobindo.*

EDITORIAL

SWEET ADVERSITY

"SO long we lived in anxiety, now at last we are going to live in hope". So said the delicious French playwright Tristan Bernard when the Germans came in, occupied Paris, arrested and imprisoned him (in the World War No. I). A noble truth nobly said by a noble soul thrown into the very midst of danger and calamity. Indeed, a danger is a danger so long as it is away and has not reached us. It is the menace, the imminence that causes more fright and upsetting than the thing itself. For it is imagination that enlarges and intensifies the object and makes of us craven cowards. The uncertainty hangs like a pall and casts a disabling influence upon the mind and nerves: one does not know what exactly to do, since the full situation is not presented or grasped and a fearful speculation becomes the only occupation.

But once the danger is right upon us and we are inside the jaws of death, there is an end of all speculation and anxiety: there are then two issues possible. One is that of absolute helplessness and hopelessness, of an unquestioning resignation, a quiet bowing down to the inevitable and implacable destiny. Many a victim on the gallows have felt like that: an incredible quietness seized them in their last moments. Very often it is the quietness of the shadow of Death—a supreme inertness, *tamas*, coming over and

possessing. But there is another issue, a more luminous egress. When all uncertainty is set at rest as to the inevitability of the calamity, when circumstances have really besieged us in their unshakable steel-frame and we are doomed obviously, it is then that comes the chance for the hero-soul to stand out and declare its freedom and immortality—deny and strive to reverse the obvious.

Man has something in him which is irrepressible in the worst of circumstances, which can and does live outside and beyond their attacks and menaces. Adverse circumstances—the more adverse the better—are God-sent in that sense, because they tend to throw us back upon ourselves, upon our inner truth and reality, which otherwise we would not have known or recognised. And it is the nature of that truth and reality to be free and happy and hopeful absolutely. And the consciousness which possesses that temper and vibration is master of an energy, a force of execution—a will and power to do the miracle.

To live in hope, to work in hope is not merely to live in illusion and to work for a chimera. On one consideration, to live otherwise, in hopelessness, cannot cure matters, even if the matter is truly and really as dark as it looks. To view a matter of fact solely and wholly in the matter of fact way does not give the right perspective of things, a proper appreciation of appearance and reality. It is well-known that often we project our imagination and apprehension upon the external world and bring about or help to bring about results that were only a possibility. Our fear calls for the object feared and makes it a reality. Apart from that, however, and on a deeper consideration, to live in hope is to react against the danger apprehended, to call in a help and power that is or can be always at our disposal, which can not only console but save. Even if death be the end and there is no escape, yet we would be freed from the wounds and scars that it inflicts upon our being with its ignorance and unconsciousness, we would learn to pass over luminously and in the full freedom of the spirit.

Hope is the image of the soul's prophetic vision. It is not just a way of escape from present sorrows, but a bridgehead leading to victory and fulfilment.

THE SOUL IN ANGUISH

It is very interesting to observe how in the modern epoch depths of consciousness are being dug up and laid bare to the common gaze, even like the archeological finds of great antiquity and of immense value that are springing surprise after surprise to our present-day civilisation. In

our inner explorations too we have often come to strike psychological veins of unusual importance and significance. It is natural to the Yogin to do so; for it is the business of his life. But even thinkers and philosophers who do not ostensibly lead the mystic life are arriving at judgments and conclusions that are not normally warranted or covered by the unaided activities of the human reason. That proves once more that man is not reason alone, that he has other faculties to go by even in the field of ordinary knowledge.

A range of mystics and philosophers or philosopher-mystics from Kierkegaard to Sartre have made much of the sentiment of "anguish". Naturally, it is not the usual feeling of grief or sorrow due to disappointment or frustration that they refer to: nor is it the "repentance" which is a cardinal virtue in the Christian spiritual discipline. Repentance or grief is for something amiss, for some wrong done, for some good not done. It has a definite cause that gives rise to it and determinate conditions that maintain and foster it: and therefore it has also an end, at least the possibility of an ending. It is not eternal and can be mastered and got over: it is of the category of the Sankhyan or Buddhistic *duhkhatrayabhighata*—for that matter even the *lacrymae rerum* (tears inherent in things) of Virgil are not eternal.

But the new Anguish spoken of is a strange phenomenon: it is causeless and it is eternal. It has sprung unbidden with no antecedent cause or condition: it is woven into the stuff of the being, part and parcel of the consciousness itself. Indeed it seems to be the veritable original sin, pertaining to the very nature. Kierkegaard makes of it an absolute necessity in the spiritual constituent and growth of the human soul—something akin to, but deeper, because ineradicable, than the Socratic "divine discontent". Sartre puts it in more philosophical and rational terms, in a secular atmosphere as a kind of inevitable accompaniment to the sense of freedom and responsibility and loneliness that besets the individual being and consciousness at its inmost core, its deepest depth.

I was speaking of the depth, of the sounding of consciousness in present-day inquiries into human nature. Sartre's investigation links itself up with the eternal inquiry graphically and beautifully described in the famous parable of the Taittiriya Upanishad (III).

In his quest for Brahman, Bhrigu came in contact first of all with the material existence and so took Matter to be the ultimate Reality. He was asked to move on and at the next step he met Life and considered that as Brahman. He was asked to move farther on and at the third stage he found Mind which then appeared to him as the Reality. He had to proceed farther

and enter and pass through other higher formulations till finally he entered the highest expanse (*parame vyoman*). Now applying the parable to the situation today and the modern quest we can say that Science like Bhrigu is at the first step—and, for some, stuck there contented like the Asura Virochana of another Upanishadic parable, although it has become fidgety and somewhat uncertain in recent times: some others—the "vitalist" scientists and philosophers—are in the second stage. And yet there is a third category, the idealist philosophers generally, who are emerging from the second into the third.

It seems that the School of Anguish is on the borderland between the second and the third stage, that is to say, the vital rising into the mental or the mental still carrying an impress of the vital consciousness. It is the emergence of the Purusha consciousness, the individual being in its heart of hearts, in its pure status: for it is that that truly evolves, progresses from level to level, deploying and marshalling according to its stress and scheme the play of its outward nature. Now the Purusha consciousness, as separate from the outward nature, has certain marked characteristics which have been fairly observed and comprehended by the exponents of the school we are dealing with. Sartre, for example, characterises this being—*être en soi*, as distinguished from *être pour soi* which is something like dynamic purusha or purusha identified or associated with *prakriti*—as composed of the sense of absolute freedom, of full responsibility, of unhindered choice and initiation. Indeed, Purusha is freedom, for in its own status it means liberation from all obligations to Prakriti. But such freedom brings in its train, not necessarily always but under certain conditions, a terrible sense of being all alone, of infinite loneliness. One is oneself, naked and face to face with one's singleness and unbreakable, unsharable individual unity. The *others* come as a product or corollary to this original *sui generis* entity. Along with the sense of freedom and choice or responsibility and loneness, there is added and gets ingrained into it the sense of fear and anxiety—the anguish (Angst). The burden that freedom and loneliness brings seems to be too great. The Purusha that has risen completely into the mental zone becomes wholly a witness, as the Sankhyans discovered, and all the movements of his nature appear outside, as if foreign: an absolute calm and unperturbed tranquillity or indifference is his character. But it is not so with regard to the being that has still one foot imbedded in the lower region of the vital consciousness; for that indeed is the proper region of anguish, of fear and apprehension, and it is there that the soul becoming conscious of itself and separate from others feels lone, lonely, companionless, without support, as it were. The mentalised vital Purusha suffers from

this peculiar night of the soul. Sartre's outlook is shot through with very many experiences of this intermediary zone of consciousness.

The being immersed in Prakriti, as normally he is, in relation and communion with others, may entertain as a pleasure and luxury, the illusion of its separateness and freedom: it can do so at ease, because it feels it has the secret support of its environment, it is courageous because it feels itself in good company. But once it rises out of the environmental level and stands truly apart and outside it—it is the mental being which can do so more or less successfully—the first feeling is that of freedom, no doubt, but along with it there is also the uncanny sense of isolation, of heavy responsibility, also a certain impotence, a loss of bearings. The normal Cartesian Co-ordinates, as it were, are gone and the being does not know where to look for the higher multi-dimensional co-ordinates. That is the real meaning of the Anguish which suddenly invades a being at a certain stage of his ascending consciousness.

The solution, the issue out is, of course, to go ahead. Instead of making the intermediary poise, however necessary it may be, a permanent character of the being and its destiny, as these philosophers tend to do, one should take another bold step, a jump upward. For the next stage, the stage when the true equilibrium, the inherent reconciliation is realised between oneself and others, between the inner soul and its outer nature is what the Upanishad describes as Vijnana, the Vast Knowledge.

SARTRIAN FREEDOM

The poise of the ego, the consciousness of the psycho-vital Purusha as envisaged and experienced by Sartre leads to many other not less catastrophic conclusions. Here is something more on Freedom which seems to be almost the corner-stone of his system:

"Freedom is not *a* being: it is *the* being of man, that is to say, his not-being". A very cryptic mantra. Let us try to unveil the Shekinah. "Being" means "be-ing" i.e. existing, something persisting, continuing in the same condition, something fixed, a status. Freedom is not a *thing* of that kind, it is movement: even so, it is not a continuous movement. According to Bergson the true, the ultimate reality is a continuity of urge (elan vital); according to Sartre, however, in line with the trend of modern scientific knowledge, the reality is an assemblage of discrete units of energy, packets or quanta. So freedom is an urge, a spurt (*jaillissement*): it acts in a disconnected fashion and it is absolute and unconditional. It is veritably the

wind that bloweth where it listeth. It has no purpose, no direction, no relation: for all those attributes or definitions would annul its absoluteness. It does not stop or halt or dwell upon, it bursts forth and passes. It does not exist, that is stay: therefore it is non-being. Man's being then consists of a conglomeration (ensemble) of such freedoms. And that is the whole reality of man, his very essence. We have said that a heavy sense of responsibility hangs upon the free Purusha: but it appears the Sartrian Purusha is a divided personality. Inspite of the sense of responsibility (or because of it?) he acts irresponsibly; for, acting otherwise would not be freedom. So then this essence, the self-consciousness, self-existence, presence in oneself is not a status, a fixed standing entity: it is not a point, even if geometrical; it is, Sartre describes, the jet from one point to another; for, real point there is none: so it is the emptiness behind all concrete realities that is the true reality, *asat brahman, shunyam*—to Sartre that is freedom, freedom absolute and ultimate.

Practically this conception of freedom brings into high relief, makes almost all in all, only one aspect, one character or attribute of freedom: the abolition of all ties and obligations and relations beyond oneself involving a hollow self-sufficiency. Naturally such an outlook requires against it a complementary one, even if it is not to correct and complete, at least to support and implement it. Sartre too cannot ignore the fact that the free being is not an isolated phenomenon in the world; it exists along with and in the company of others of the same nature and quality. Indeed human society is that in essence, an *association of freedoms*, although these movements of freedom are camouflaged in appearance and are not recognised by the free persons themselves. The interaction between the free persons, the reflection of oneself in others and the mutual dependence of egos is a constant theme in the novels and plays of Sartre.

Freedom cannot be real freedom unless it is license: yet society means a curtailment or inhibition or modification of this absolute liberty. This conflict has never been resolved in Sartre and is fundamental to his ideology, the source of his tragic nihilism. That is because the consciousness here lives horizontally, level with the normal, what we described as psychovital consciousness. The way out lies in transcendence, in a vertical uplifting of the consciousness and the being.

A MODERNIST MENTALITY

André Gide, a very well-known name in French letters for the last half

a century, is quoted, very appreciatively, in the editorial of the "World Review" (July 1950), as saying:

"The world can only be saved, if it can be, by the rebels. Without them there would be an end to our civilisation, our culture, all that we love and that gave to our presence on earth a secret justification. They are, these rebels, the salt of the earth and the men sent from God. For I am convinced that God does not exist, and that we have to create him."

The truth expressed in these well-chiselled lines ("purple patches", I was going to say perhaps somewhat uncharitably) is, as always happens when we are for a rounded phrase and a neat thought, only half truth or even quarter truth. It all depends on the meaning we attach to the words, the shade trailing behind the thought. For, first of all, it is true, it is even a truism that the rebel is a necessary agent in the economy of human evolution; but if by rebel we mean the sheer iconoclast, the mere or in the main destroyer—and the word, especially since it is given preference, does carry that connotation—then the sentence loses most of its truth or value and becomes only a shibboleth or slogan.

The old, fossilised or rotten past has to be destroyed and ruthlessly eradicated, no doubt: but, how is it to be done and who will do it? By a simple process of sledge-hammering—breaking, burning? By anybody who cares to do it? It does not require much sense or intelligence to see that that is not the ideal nor even the most effective way of doing the thing. The best way to destroy, the wise say, is to construct. Look at Nature, how she is going about the thing. Something is crumbling, precisely because something is growing within or behind. It is the drive of a living growth in secret that pushes a limb no longer necessary or useful to decay and death. Man too in his work of reformation or regeneration should learn that lesson, whether in respect of his individual or of his collective growth and evolution. Discover the truth that is to replace the old, live it intensely and wholly —the old past will automatically slip down like old clothes or drop like yellow sapless leaves.

Further Monsieur Gide says, God is nowhere, he has to be created. If he means that God is not anywhere in the manifest physical world, especially, the physical world of today, it is true, though here too partially true. God is never truly absent; even in and through this dismal and distressed age of ours he is ever present, a living power of abounding grace—even if behind the veil, even if not patent to the sense-bound observer. Still God has to be made patent, established concretely in the physical world also, in the everyday normal human affairs. But, again, how to do it? And who is to do it? You or I in our complete, at best half-lit hazy ignorance? By running

blindly full-tilt against any and all atheism and denial and egoism and arrogance, shouting at them, pointing the finger of scorn at them or being physically violent upon them? It were best if we moved with as much vigour against our own selves, against the ungodly within us. If one begins seriously at home, in dealing with oneself one will be best equipped to deal with the others and the world, in the process of new creating in oneself one will be in a position to find out exactly what lies in the way of a new creation outside.

A deeper sense of truth and rectitude says: you have no right to break unless you have the power to make. Even an illusion you cannot and should not break if you do not know how and what to replace; you will only replace it by a greater and more disastrous illusion. you must yourself have the full vision of the truth, you must yourself realise and establish it in yourself, in your inner being as well as your outer personality. Then only you will have secured full authority (Ramakrishna's *chapras*, badge) to make and unmake. If you have not the needed authority, then you must obey implicitly one who possesses the authority.

This is a counsel of perfection, one might say, and human things are not usually done in this way. But precisely because things are not done in this way that human affairs are always in a muddle and continue to be more or less the same eternal merry-go-round. It is only when things are done in the ideal way that the ideal can be established fully, the perfect remedy obtained.

Savitri

BOOK FOUR

THE BOOK OF BIRTH AND QUEST

CANTO THREE

THE CALL TO THE QUEST

A MORN that seemed a new creation's front,
Bringing a greater sunlight, happier skies,
Came, burdened with a beauty moved and strange
Out of the changeless origin of things.
An ancient longing struck again new roots.
The air drank deep of unfulfilled desire;
The high trees trembled with a wandering wind
Like souls that quiver at the approach of joy,
And in a bosom of green secrecy
For ever of its one love-note untired
A lyric coïl cried among the leaves.
Away from the terrestrial murmur turned
Where transient calls and answers mix their flood,
King Aswapathy listened through the ray
To other sounds than meet the sense-formed ear.
On a subtle interspace which rings our life
Unlocked were the inner spirit's trance-closed doors:
The inaudible strain in Nature could be caught;
Across this cyclic tramp of eager lives,
Across the deep urgency of present cares,
Earth's wordless hymn to the Ineffable
Arose from the ardent heart of the cosmic Void;
He heard the voice repressed of unborn Powers
Murmuring behind the luminous bars of Time.
Again the mighty yearning raised its flame

That asks a perfect life on earth for men
And prays for certainty in the uncertain mind
And shadowless bliss for suffering human hearts
And Truth embodied in an ignorant world
And godhead divinising mortal forms.
A word that leaped from some far sky of thought,
Admitted by the cowled receiving scribe
Traversed the echoing passages of his brain
And left its stamp on the recording cells.
"O Force-compelled, Fate-driven earth-born race,
O petty adventurers in an infinite world
And prisoners of a dwarf humanity,
How long will you tread the circling tracks of mind
Around your little self and petty things?
But not for a changeless littleness were you meant,
Not for vain repetition were you built;
Out of the Immortal's substance you were made;
Your actions can be swift revealing steps,
Your life a changeful mould for growing gods.
A Seer, a strong Creator, is within,
The immaculate Grandeur broods upon your days,
Almighty powers are shut in Nature's cells.
A greater destiny waits you in your front:
This transient earthly being if he wills
Can fit his acts to a transcendent scheme.
He who now stares at the world with ignorant eyes
Hardly from the Inconscient's night aroused
That look at images and not at Truth
Can fill those orbs with an immortal's sight.
Yet shall the godhead grow within your hearts,
You shall awake into the spirit's air
And feel the breaking walls of mortal mind
And hear the message which left life's heart dumb
And look through Nature with sun-gazing lids
And blow your conch-shells at the Eternal's gate.
Authors of earth's high change, to you it is given
To cross the dangerous spaces of the soul
And touch the mighty Mother stark awake
And meet the Omnipotent in this house of flesh
And make of life the million-bodied One.

The earth you tread is a border screened from heaven,
The life you lead conceals the light you are.
Immortal Powers sweep flaming past your doors;
Far-off upon your tops the god-chant sounds
While to exceed yourselves thought's trumpets call,
Heard by a few, but fewer dare aspire,
The nympholepts of the ecstasy and the blaze.
An epic of hope and failure breaks earth's heart;
Her force and will exceed her form and fate.
A goddess in a net of inconscience caught,
Self-bound in the pastures of death she dreams of life,
Self-racked with the pains of hell aspires to joy,
And builds to hope her altars of despair,
Knows that one high step might enfranchise all
And, suffering, looks for greatness in her sons.
But dim in human hearts the ascending fire,
The invisible Grandeur sits unworshipped there;
Man sees the Highest in a limiting form
Or looks upon a Person, hears a Name.
He turns for little gains to ignorant Powers
Or kindles his altar lights to a demon face.
He loves the Ignorance fathering his pain.
A spell is laid upon his glorious strengths.
He has lost the inner Voice that led his thoughts,
And masking the oracular tripod seat
A specious Idol fills the marvel shrine.
The great Illusion wraps him in its veils,
The soul's deep intimations come in vain,
In vain is the unending line of seers,
The sages ponder in unsubstantial light,
The poets lend their voice to outward dreams,
A homeless fire inspires the prophet tongues.
Heaven's flaming lights descend and back return,
The luminous Eye approaches and retires;
Eternity speaks, none understands its word;
Fate is unwilling and the Abyss denies;
The Inconscient's mindless waters block all done.
Only a little lifted is Mind's screen.
The Wise who know see but one half of Truth,
The strong climb hardly to a low-peaked height,

The hearts that yearn are given one hour to love,
His tale half-told, falters the secret Bard;
The gods are still too few in mortal forms."
The Voice withdrew into its hidden skies.
But like a shining answer from the gods
Approached through sun-bright spaces Savitri.
Advancing amid tall heaven-pillaring trees,
Apparelled in her flickering-coloured robe,
She seemed burning towards the eternal realms
A bright moved torch of incense and of flame
That from the sky-roofed temple-soil of earth
A pilgrim hand lifts in an invisible shrine.
There came the gift of a revealing hour:
He saw through depths that reinterpret all,
Limited not now by the dull body's eyes,
New-found through an arch of clear discovery,
This intimation of the world's delight,
This wonder of the divine Artist's make
Carved like a nectar-cup for thirsty gods,
This breathing Scripture of the Eternal's joy,
This net of sweetness woven of aureate fire.
Transformed the delicate image-face became
A deeper Nature's self-revealing sign,
A gold-leaf palimpsest of sacred births,
A grave world-symbol chiselled out of life.
Her brow, a copy of clear unstained heavens,
Was meditation's pedestal and defence,
The very room and smile of musing Space,
Its brooding line infinity's symbol curve.
Amid her tress's cloudy multitude
The long eyes shadowed as by wings of Night
Under that moon-gold forehead's dreaming breadth
Were seas of love and thought that held the world;
Marvelling at life and earth they saw truths far.
A deathless meaning filled her mortal limbs;
As in a golden vase's poignant line
They seemed to carry the rhythmic sob of bliss
Of earth's mute adoration towards heaven
Released in beauty's cry of living form
Towards the perfection of eternal things.

Transparent grown the ephemeral living dress
Bared the expressive deity to his view.
Escaped from surface sight and mortal sense
The seizing harmony of its shapes became
The strange significant icon of a Power
Renewing its inscrutable descent
Into a human figure of its works
That stood out in life's bold abrupt relief
On the soil of the evolving universe,
A godhead sculptured on a wall of thought,
Mirrored in the flowing hours and dimly shrined
In Matter as in a cathedral cave.
Annulled were the transient values of the mind,
The body's sense renounced its earthly look,
Immortal met immortal in their gaze.
Awaked from the close spell of daily use
That hides soul-truth with the outward form's disguise,
He saw through the familiar cherished limbs
The great and unknown spirit born his child.
An impromptu from the deeper sight within,
Thoughts rose in him that knew not their own scope.
Then to those large and brooding depths whence Love
Regarded him across the straits of mind,
He spoke in sentences from the unseen Heights.
A casual passing phrase can change our life.
For the hidden prompters of our speech sometimes
Can use the formulas of a moment's mood
To weigh unconscious lips with words from Fate.
"O Spirit, traveller of eternity,
Who camest from the immortal spaces here
Armed for the splendid hazard of thy life
To set thy conquering foot on Chance and Time,
The moon shut in her halo dreams like thee.
A mighty Presence still defends thy frame.
Perhaps the heavens guard thee for some great soul,
Thy fate, thy work are kept somewhere afar,
Thy spirit came not down a star alone.
O living inscription of the beauty of love
Missalled in aureate virginity,
What message of heavenly strength and bliss in thee

Is written with the Eternal's sun-white script,
One shall discover and greaten with it his life
To whom thou loosenest thy heart's jewelled strings.
O rubies of silence, lips from which there stole
Low laughter, music of tranquillity,
Star-lustrous eyes awake in sweet large night
And limbs like fine-linked poems made of gold
Stanzaed to glimmering curves by artist gods,
Depart where love and destiny call your charm.
Venture through the deep world to find thy mate.
For somewhere on the longing breast of earth,
Thy unknown lover waits for thee the unknown.
Thy soul has strength and needs no other guide
Than One who burns within thy bosom's powers.
There shall draw near to meet thy approaching steps
The second self for whom thy nature asks,
He who shall walk until thy body's end
A close-bound traveller pacing with thy pace,
The lyrist of thy soul's most intimate chords
Who shall give voice to what in thee is mute.
Then shall you grow like vibrant kindred harps,
One in the beats of difference and delight,
Responsive in divine and equal strains,
Discovering new notes of the eternal theme.
One force shall be your mover and your guide,
One light shall be around you and within;
Hand in strong hand confront Heaven's question, life:
Challenge the ordeal of the immense disguise.
Ascend from Nature to divinity's heights;
Face the high gods, crowned with felicity,
Then meet a greater God, thy self beyond Time."
This word was seed of all the thing to be.
A hand from some Greatness opened her heart's locked doors
And showed the work for which her strength was born.
As when the mantra sinks in Yoga's ear,
Its message enters stirring the blind brain
And keeps in the dim ignorant cells its sound;
The hearer understands a form of words
And, musing on the index thought it holds,
He strives to read it with the labouring mind,

But finds bright hints, not the embodied truth:
Then, falling silent in himself to know
He meets the deeper listening of his soul:
The Word repeats itself in rhythmic strains:
Thought, vision, feeling, sense, the body's self
Are seized unalterably and he endures
An ecstasy and an immortal change;
He feels a Wideness and becomes a Power,
All knowledge rushes on him like a sea:
Transmuted by the white spiritual ray
He walks in naked heavens of joy and calm,
Sees the God-face and hears transcendent speech.
An equal greatness in her life was sown.
Accustomed scenes were now an ended play.
Moving in muse amid familiar powers,
Touched by new magnitudes and faery signs,
She turned to vastnesses not yet her own;
Allured her heart throbbed to unknown sweetnesses;
The secrets of an unseen world were close.
The morn went up into a smiling sky;
Cast from its sapphire pinnacle of trance
Day sank into the burning gold of eve;
The moon floated, a luminous waif through heaven
And sank below the oblivious edge of dream;
Night lit the watch fires of eternity.
Then all went back into mind's secret caves;
A darkness stooping on the heaven-bird's wings
Sealed in her senses from external sight
And opened the stupendous depths of sleep.
When the pale dawn slipped through Night's shadowy guard,
Vainly the new-born light desired her face;
The palace woke to its own emptiness;
The sovereign of its daily joys was far;
Her moonbeam feet tinged not the lucent floors:
The beauty and divinity were gone.
Delight had fled to search the spacious world.

Sri Aurobindo

LETTERS OF SRI AUROBINDO

I

IN every human being there are two parts, the psychic with so much of the thinking mind and higher (emotional, larger dynamic) vital that is open to the psychic and cleaves to the soul's aims and admits the higher experiences and, on the other hand, the lower vital and the physical or external being (external mind and vital included) which are attached to the ignorant personality and nature and do not want to change. It is the conflict between these two that makes all the difficulty of the sadhana. All the difficulties you enumerate arise from that and nothing else. It is only by curing the duality that one can overcome them. That happens when one is able to live within, aware of one's inner being, identified with it and to regard the rest as not oneself, as a creation of ignorant Nature from which one has separated oneself and which has to disappear and, secondly, when by opening oneself constantly to the Divine Light and Force and the Mother's presence, a dynamic action of sadhana is constantly maintained which steadily pushes out the movements of the Ignorance and substitutes even in the lower vital and physical being the movements of the inner and higher nature. There is then no struggle any longer, but an automatic growth of the divine elements and fading out of the undivine. The devotion of the heart and the increasing activity of the psychic being, which is best helped by devotion and self-giving, are the most powerful means for arriving at this condition.

22-8-1937

II

It is obvious that poetry cannot be a substitute for sadhana; it can be an accompaniment only. If there is a feeling (of devotion, surrender, etc.), it can express and confirm it; if there is an experience, it can express and strengthen the force of experience. As reading of books like the Upanishads

or Gita or singing of devotional songs can help, especially at one stage or another, so this can help also. Also it opens a passage between the external consciousness and the inner mind or vital. But if one stops at that, then nothing much is gained. Sadhana must be the main thing and sadhana means the purification of the nature, the consecration of the being, the opening of the psychic and the inner mind and vital, the contact and presence of the Divine, the realisation of the Divine in all things, surrender, devotion, the widening of the consciousness into the cosmic Consciousness, the Self one in all, the psychic and the spiritual transformation of the nature.

If these things are neglected and only poetry and mental development and social contact occupy all the time, then that is not sadhana. Also the poetry must be written in the true spirit, not for fame or self-satisfaction, but as a means of contact with the Divine through inspiration or of the expression of one's own inner being, as it was written formerly by those who left behind them so much devotional and spiritual poetry in India; it does not help if it is written only in the spirit of the Western artist or litterateur. Even works or meditation cannot succeed unless they are done in the right spirit of consecration and spiritual aspiration gathering up the whole being and dominating all else. It is the lack of this gathering up of the whole life and nature and turning it towards the one aim, which is the defect in so many here, that lowers the atmosphere and stands in the way of what is being done by myself and the Mother.

19-5-1938

III

In our Yoga the Nirvana is the beginning of the higher Truth, as it is the passage from the Ignorance to the higher Truth. The Ignorance has to be extinguished in order that the Truth may manifest.

SRI AUROBINDO

THE GODWARD EMOTIONS*

THE principle of Yoga is to turn Godward all or any of the powers of the human consciousness so that through that activity of the being there may be contact, relation, union. In the Yoga of Bhakti it is the emotional nature that is made the instrument. Its main principle is to adopt some human relation between man and the Divine Being by which, through the ever intenser flowing of the heart's emotions towards him, the human soul may at last be wedded to and grow one with him in a passion of divine Love. It is not ultimately the pure peace of oneness or the power and desireless will of oneness, but the ecstatic joy of union which the devotee seeks by his Yoga. Every feeling that can make the heart ready for this ecstasy the Yoga admits; everything that detracts from it must increasingly drop away as the strong union of love becomes closer and more perfect.

All the feelings with which religion approaches the worship, service and love of God, the Yoga admits, if not as its final accompaniments, yet as preparatory movements of the emotional nature. But there is one feeling with which the Yoga, at least as practised in India, has very little dealing. In certain religions, in most perhaps, the idea of the fear of God plays a very large part, sometimes the largest, and the God-fearing man is the typical worshipper of these religions. The sentiment of fear is indeed perfectly consistent with devotion of a certain kind and up to a certain point; at its highest it rises into a worship of the divine Power, the divine Justice, divine Law, divine Righteousness, an ethical obedience, an awed reverence for the almighty Creator and Judge. Its motive is therefore ethico-religious and it belongs not so strictly to the devotee, but to the man of works moved by a devotion to the divine ordainer and judge of his works. It regards God as the King and does not approach too near the glory of his throne unless justified by righteousness or led there by a mediator who will turn away the divine wrath for sin. Even when it draws nearest, it keeps an awed distance between itself and the high object of its worship. It cannot embrace the Divine with all the fearless confidence of the child in his mother or of

* *The Synthesis of Yoga*, Part II (The Yoga of Divine Love), Chapter 3.

the lover in his beloved or with that intimate sense of oneness which perfect love brings with it.

The origin of this divine fear was crude enough in some of the primitive popular religions. It was the perception of powers in the world greater than man, obscure in their nature and workings, which seemed always ready to strike him down in his prosperity and to smite him for any actions which displeased them. Fear of the gods arose from man's ignorance of God and his ignorance of the laws that govern the world. It attributed to the higher powers caprice and human passion; it made them in the image of the great ones of the earth, capable of whim, tyranny, personal enmity, jealous of any greatness in man which might raise him above the littleness of terrestrial nature and bring him too near to the divine nature. With such notions no real devotion could arise, except that doubtful kind which the weaker may feel for the stronger whose protection he can buy by worship and gifts and propitiation and obedience to such laws as he may have laid upon those beneath him and may enforce by rewards and punishments, or else the submissive and prostrate reverence and adoration which one may feel for a greatness, glory, wisdom, sovereign power which is above the world and is the source or at any rate the regulator of all its laws and happenings.

A nearer approach to the beginnings of the way of devotion becomes possible when this element of divine Power disengages itself from these crudities and fixes on the idea of a divine ruler, creator of the world and master of the Law who governs the earth and heavens and is the guide and helper and saviour of his creatures. This larger and higher idea of the divine Being long kept many elements and still keeps some elements of the old crudity. The Jews who brought it forward most prominently and from whom it overspread a great part of the world, could believe in a God of righteousness who was exclusive, arbitrary, wrathful, jealous, often cruel and even wantonly sanguinary. Even now it is possible for some to believe in a Creator who has made heaven and hell, an eternal heaven and an eternal hell, the two poles of his creation, and has even according to some religions predestined the souls he has created not only to sin and punishment, but to an eternal damnation. But even apart from these extravagances of a childish religious belief, the idea of the almighty Judge, Legislator, King, is a crude and imperfect idea of the Divine, when taken by itself, because it takes an inferior and an external truth for the main truth and it tends to prevent a higher approach to a more intimate reality. It exaggerates the importance of the sense of sin and thereby prolongs and increases the soul's fear and self-distrust and weakness. It attaches the pursuit of virtue and the shunning of sin to the idea of rewards and punishment, though given in an after life, and makes

them dependent on the lower motives of fear and interest instead of the higher spirit which should govern the ethical being. It makes hell and heaven and not the Divine himself the object of the human soul in its religious living. These crudities have served their turn in the slow education of the human mind, but they are of no utility to the Yogin who knows that whatever truth they may represent belongs rather to the external relations of the developing human soul with the external law of the universe than any intimate truth of the inner relations of the human soul with the Divine; but it is these which are the proper field of Yoga.

Still out of this conception there arise certain developments which bring us nearer to the threshold of the Yoga of devotion. First, there can emerge the idea of the Divine as the source and law and aim of our ethical being and from this there can come the knowledge of him as the highest Self to which our active nature aspires, the Will to which we have to assimilate our will, the eternal Right and Purity and Truth and Wisdom into harmony with which our nature has to grow and towards whose being our being is attracted. By this way we arrive at the Yoga of works, and this Yoga has a place for personal devotion to the Divine, for the divine Will appears as the Master of our works to whose voice we must listen, whose divine impulsion we must obey and whose work it is the sole business of our active life and will to do. Secondly, there emerges the idea of the divine Spirit, the father of of all who extends his wings of benignant protection and love over all his creatures, and from that grows between the soul and the Divine the relation of father and child, a relation of love, and as a result, the relation of brotherhood with our fellow beings. These relations of the Divine into the calm pure light of whose nature we have to grow and the Master whom we approach through works and service, the Father who responds to the love of the soul that approaches him as the child, are admitted elements of the Yoga of devotion.

The moment we come well into these developments and their deeper spiritual meaning, the motive of the fear of God becomes otiose, superfluous and even impossible. It is of importance chiefly in the ethical field when the soul has not yet grown sufficiently to follow good for its own sake and needs an authority above it whose wrath or whose stern passionless judgment it can fear and found upon that fear its fidelity to virtue. When we grow into spirituality, this motive can no longer remain except by the lingering on of some confusion in the mind, some persistence of the old mentality. Moreover, the ethical aim in Yoga is different from that of the external idea of virtue. Ordinarily, ethics is regarded as a sort of machinery of right action, the act is everything and how to do the right act is the whole

question and the whole trouble. But to the Yogin action is chiefly important not for its own sake, but rather as a means for the growth of the soul Godward. Therefore what Indian spiritual writings lay stress upon is not so much the quality of the action to be done as the quality of the soul from which the action flows, upon its truth, fearlessness, purity, love, compassion, benevolence, absence of the will to hurt, and upon the actions as their outflowings. The old western idea that human nature is intrinsically bad and virtue is a thing to be followed out in despite of our fallen nature to which it is contrary, is foreign to the Indian mentality trained from ancient times in the ideas of the Yogins. Our nature contains, as well as its passionate rajasic and its downward-tending tamasic quality, a purer sattwic element and it is the encouragement of this, its highest part, which is the business of ethics. By it we increase the divine nature, *daivi prakriti*, which is present in us and get rid of the Titanic and demoniac elements. Not therefore the Hebraic righteousness of the Godfearing man, but the purity, love, beneficence, truth, fearlessness, harmlessness of the saint and the God-lover are the goal of the ethical growth according to this notion. And, speaking more largely, to grow into the divine nature is the consummation of the ethical being. This can be done best by realising God as the higher Self, the guiding and uplifting Will or the Master whom we love and serve. Not fear of him, but love of him and aspiration to the freedom and eternal purity of his being must be the motive.

Certainly, fear enters into the relations of the master and the servant and even of the father and the child, but only when they are on the human level, when control and subjection and punishment figure predominantly in them and love is obliged to efface itself more or less behind the mask of authority. The Divine even as the Master does not punish anybody, does not threaten, does not force obedience. It is the human soul that has freely to come to the Divine and offer itself to his overpowering force that he may seize and uplift it towards his own divine levels, and give it that joy of mastery of the finite nature by the Infinite and of service to the Highest by which there comes freedom from the ego and the lower nature. Love is the key of this relation, and this service, *dasyam*, is in Indian Yoga the happy service of the divine Friend or the passionate service to the divine Beloved. The Master of the worlds, who in the Gita demands of his servant, the bhakta, to be nothing more in life than his instrument, makes this claim as the friend, the guide, the higher Self, and describes himself as the Lord of all the worlds who is the friend of all creatures, *sarvalokamaheśvaram suhridam sarvabhūtānām*; the two relations in fact must go together and neither can be perfect without the other. So too it is not the fatherhood of God as the

Creator who demands obedience because he is the maker of our being, but the fatherhood of love which leads us towards the closer soul-union of Yoga. Love is the real key in both, and perfect love is inconsistent with the admission of the motive of fear. Closeness of the human soul to the Divine is the object, and fear sets always a barrier and a distance; even awe and reverence for the divine Power are a sign of distance and division and they disappear in the intimacy of the union of love. Moreover, fear belongs to the lower nature, to the lower self, and in approaching the higher Self must be put aside before we can enter into its presence.

This relation of the divine fatherhood and the closer relation with the Divine as the Mother-Soul of the universe have their springs in another early religious motive. One type of the bhakta, says the Gita, is the devotee who comes to the Divine as the giver of his wants, the giver of his good, the satisfier of the needs of his inner and his outer being. "I bring to my bhakta", says the Lord, "his getting and his having of good, *yogakshema vahāmyaham*". The life of man is a life of wants and needs and therefore of desires, not only in his physical and vital, but in his mental and spiritual being. When he becomes conscious of a greater Power governing the world, he approaches it through prayer for the fulfilment of his needs, for help in his rough journey, for protection and aid in his struggle. Whatever crudities there may be in the ordinary religious approach to God by prayer, and there are many, especially that attitude which imagines the Divine as if capable of being propitiated, bribed, flattered into acquiescence or indulgence by praise, entreaty and gifts and has often little regard to the spirit in which he is approached, still this way of turning to the Divine is an essential movement of our religious being and reposes on a universal truth.

The efficacy of prayer is often doubted and prayer itself supposed to be a thing irrational and necessarily superfluous and ineffective. It is true that the universal Will executes always its aim and cannot be deflected by egoistic propitiation and entreaty; it is true of the Transcendent who expresses himself in the universal order that, being omniscient, his larger knowledge must foresee the thing to be done and it does not need direction or stimulation by human thought and that the individual's desires are not and cannot be in any world-order the true determining factor. But neither is that order or the execution of the universal Will altogether effected by mechanical Law, but by powers and forces of which for human life, at least human will, aspiration and faith are not among the least important. Prayer is only a particular form given to that will, aspiration and faith. Its forms are very often crude and not only childlike, which is in itself no defect, but childish; still it has a real power and significance. Its power and sense is to put

the will, aspiration and faith of man into touch with the divine Will as that of a conscious Being with whom we can enter into conscious and living relations. For our will and aspiration can act either by our own strength and endeavour, which can no doubt be made a thing great and effective whether for lower or higher purposes,—and there are plenty of disciplines which put it forward as the one force to be used,—or it can act in dependence upon and with subordination to the divine or the universal Will. And this latter way, again, may either look upon that Will as responsive indeed to our aspiration, but almost mechanically, by a sort of law of energy, or at any rate quite impersonally, or else it may look upon it as responding consciously to the divine aspiration and faith of the human soul and consciously bringing to it the help, the guidance, the protection and fruition demanded, *yogakshema vahāmyaham.*

Prayer helps to prepare this relation for us at first on the lower plane even while it is there consistent with much that is mere egoism and self-delusion; but afterwards we can draw towards the spiritual truth which is behind it. It is not then the giving of the thing asked for that matters, but the relation itself, the contact of man's life with God, the conscious interchange. In spiritual matters and in the seeking of spiritual gains, this conscious relation is a great power; it is a much greater power than our own entirely self-reliant struggle and effort and it brings a fuller spiritual growth and experience. Necessarily, in the end prayer either ceases in the greater thing for which it prepared us,—in fact the form we call prayer is not itself essential so long as the faith, the will, the aspiration are there,—or remains only for the joy of the relation. Also its objects, the *artha* or interest it seeks to realise, become higher and higher until we reach the highest motiveless devotion, which is that of divine love pure and simple without any other demand or longing.

The relations which arise out of this attitude towards the Divine, are that of the divine Father and the Mother with the child and that of the divine Friend. To the Divine as these things the human soul comes for help, for protection, for guidance, for fruition,—or if knowledge be the aim, to the Guide, Teacher, Giver of light, for the Divine is the Sun of knowledge,—or it comes in pain and suffering for relief and solace and deliverance, it may be deliverance either from the suffering itself or from the world-existence which is the habitat of the suffering or from all its inner and real causes.* In these things we find there is a certain gradation.

* These are three of the four classes of devotees which are recognised by the Gita, *ārta, arthārthī, jijnāsu,* the distressed, the seeker of personal objects and the seeker of God-knowledge.

For the relation of fatherhood is always less close, intense, passionate, intimate, and therefore it is less resorted to in the Yoga which seeks for the closest union. That of the divine Friend is a thing sweeter and more intimate, admits of an equality and intimacy even in inequality and the beginning of mutual self-giving; at its closest when all idea of other giving and taking disappears, when this relation becomes motiveless except for the one sole all-sufficing motive of love, it turns into the free and happy relation of the playmate in the Lila of existence. But closer and more intimate still is the relation of the Mother and the child, and that therefore plays a very large part wherever the religious impulse is most richly fervent and springs most warmly from the heart of man. The soul goes to the Mother-Soul in all its desires and troubles, and the Divine Mother wishes that it should be so, so that she may pour out her heart of love. It turns to her too because of the self-existent nature of this love and because that points us to the home towards which we turn from our wanderings in the world and to the bosom in which we find our rest.

But the highest and the greatest relation is that which starts from none of the ordinary religious motives, but is rather of the very essence of Yoga, springs from the very nature of love itself; it is the passion of the Lover and the Beloved. Wherever there is the desire of the soul for its utter union with God, this form of the divine yearning makes its way even into religions which seem to do without it and give it no place in their ordinary system. Here the one thing asked for is love, the one thing feared is the loss of love, the one sorrow is the sorrow of separation of love; for all other things either do not exist for the lover or come in only as incidents or as results and not as objects or conditions of love. All love is indeed in its nature self-existent because it springs from a secret oneness in being and a sense of that oneness or desire of oneness in the heart between souls that are yet able to conceive of themselves as different from each other and divided. Therefore all these other relations too can arrive at their self-existent motiveless joy of being for the sake of love alone. But still they start from and to the end they, to some extent, find a satisfaction of their play in other motives. But here the beginning is love and the end is love and the whole aim is love. There is indeed the desire of possession, but even this is overcome in the fullness of the self-existent love and the final demand of the bhakta is simply that his bhakti may never cease nor diminish. He does not ask for heaven or for liberation from birth or for any other object, but only that his love may be eternal and absolute.

Love is a passion and it seeks for two things, eternity and intensity, and in the relation of the Lover and Beloved the seeking for eternity and for

intensity is instinctive and self-born. Love is a seeking for mutual possession, and it is here that the demand for mutual possession becomes absolute. Passing beyond desire of possession which means a difference, it is a seeking for oneness, and it is here that the idea of oneness, of two souls merging into each other and becoming one finds the acme of its longing and the utterness of its satisfaction. Love, too, is a yearning for beauty, and it is here that the yearning is eternally satisfied in the vision and the touch and the joy of the All-beautiful. Love is a child and a seeker of Delight, and it is here that it finds the highest possible ecstasy both of the heart-consciousness and of every fibre of the being. Moreover, this relation is that which as between human being and human being demands the most and, even while reaching the greatest intensities, is still the least satisfied, because only in the Divine can it find its real and its utter satisfaction. Therefore it is here most that the turning of human emotion Godwards finds its full meaning and discovers all the truth of which love is the human symbol, all its essential instincts divinised, raised, satisfied in the bliss from which our life was born and towards which by oneness it returns in the Ananda of the divine existence where love is absolute, eternal and unalloyed.

SRI AUROBINDO

THE SPIRITUAL BASIS OF PERSONALITY*

II

WHAT do we mean when we say that a divine Emergence or Becoming is the underlying motive of the evolutionary process? In the first place we have seen that the universe has not only emanated from the One Supreme, but that the very substance of Creation holds the Divine Nature as its inner Being and Essence. A successive Descent of that higher Nature to form the hidden subliminal recesses of Cosmos, was but the prelude and secret preparation for the progressive ascent of the lower Nature—the outer manifestation—through a multiplicity of individual points. Secondly, the scheme of this Cosmic movement springs not from a grandiose dream, or an accidental combination of forces, but is the progressively conscious revelation of the Divine Nature, which is the inner Truth of things. This outward emergence of that which is secreted within is in fact the fundamental principle running through the whole development of the universe. We can say therefore, that the real purpose of man's existence is yet to manifest in the life of the world that Divine Nature which is both immanent and transcendent.

The ancient Seers had already discerned that the inner Truth threaded through all things was the compound of an infinite Bliss and self-conscious Existence. By transcending the Cosmic Reality they had been able to vision the Divine Nature in its utter purity and perfection as the intimate fusion of Being, Consciousness and Bliss, or Sachchidananda. This basic formula, as experience proves it to be, is the highest conception that human consciousness can project in finite terms, of that which is an infinite as well as an intimate and omnipresent Reality. It was in a later age that the ancient Greeks put forth, from a cosmic vision of Reality, the ever-present verities of Goodness, Truth and Beauty as the highest ideals of man. But these ideals, as we now see them, are not representative of the fullest Truths, nor do they embody the ultimate aim of human life. They are, in fact, the

* Based on '*The Life Divine*'.

translation in universal terms of the wider Transcendent realisation. Yet another triune derivative of the Supreme was that given by the religious conception of God, which seemed to offer a more intimate and personal relationship than that presented by the remote and impersonal Transcendence. Such was the Trinity of Father, Son and Holy Ghost. In this conception the Father represents the Origin and supreme Source,—the Being from whom all things are derived. The Holy Ghost or all-pervading Spirit is the Consciousness, the very Breath of the Divine which permeates all things and out of which the substance of the worlds has come. And the Son, the crowning glory of the Trinity, is symbolical of the Grace which descends into the world, and becomes through God's infinite Love the concentrated seed for growth into the divinised Personality. But this Trinity, even though it brings that infinite Presence of the Divine closer to our human level of understanding, does not represent its whole Reality. It reveals a profound Truth in personal terms, but does not give the supreme Transcendent vision, the supra-human Truth which the Vedantic Seers had formulated as Sachchidananda. Nor does it help to raise man to those greater heights of God-consciousness. Rather has it tended to humble the human personality and to obscure the divinity inherent in man. The Vedantic Seers had had the courage to reach beyond the narrow human level of perception, sensing that this limited sphere of outlook was not the final state of man. By thus surpassing the human orbit of consciousness they were able to declare decisively: "He (the Supreme Being and Divine Nature) I (the indwelling Spirit) am". Yet it was no grandiose declaration, but the steady and fearless seeing of a higher Truth and Law to which man could, and should, ultimately attain.

We can now see more clearly the trend and direction of the universal pattern. In the Descent of the Supreme Reality there are successive levels which, though ordinarily occult to us, may enter our awareness through a gradual widening into the Cosmic Consciousness. The Manifestation, on the other hand, has taken the form of a progressive Ascent, which appears in the world as an emergent Evolution. Each level of the descent has in this way become a stage in man's ascension. The evolutionary process is characterised by the emergence of an increasingly ordered complexity. First there was the struggle of Life out of Matter, which modern Science views separately as the increasing organisation of a creative evolution on the one hand, and the increasing disorganisation of a wholly inanimate world on the other. Later comes the first glimmer of Mind, appearing primarily as an inward concentration on its own activity. The animal instinct, for the most part unaware of its own action, becomes a fumbling

self-consciousness. At first it is uncertain of its powers and capabilities, but later it attempts to reach towards some measure of self-mastery. It is at this stage that self-consciousness, turning from merely an outward contemplation on things, begins to realise that there is a greater Self beyond the narrow egoistic personality. It is thus that one becomes aware of the inner subliminal self, and behind it the universal Self and the vast Cosmic Reality. We begin to recognise that there is in fact a greater entity than Mind —the wider principle of Supermind—which is the next stage in man's ascent and to which Mind itself can thus progressively open. Yet the attainment of self-mastery and of a wider Consciousness are but steps in one's preparation for the ultimate Descent of that higher principle. For it is a universal law that at each stage of the ascent some higher and as yet hidden factor of the unmanifest and the subliminal has to be brought out to reinforce and establish that which is but an immature emergence. It is thus that man may be gradually and fully transformed into an integrated Gnostic Being, in whom the universe and the individual are unified by a higher Law and Nature, which is the Divine Purity and Perfection.

We can now begin to recognise that the world-shattering force, locked within the atomic nucleus, which modern Science is investigating, is none other than the supreme Conscious Force,—a Power of the Divine Nature itself. But Matter is wholly inconscient of that potential Power and Energy which is thus held within it. It is only when Life and later Mind begin to emerge that we see something of that inexhaustible Energy being brought into play. But for Life the predominant expression is that of an Ignorance, —a many-branching movement unaware of its own purpose and existence. In its pure spontaneous play we are inclined to see a superficial innocence, but delving below the surface movements we discern the grosser blindness of a distorted knowledge, which is the real root of Life. Similarly in the development of Mind we find that the central motive power has come to revolve round an aberration of its pristine origin. Here Desire has become that central factor, displaying an insistent grovelling and grasping to possess all that which is apparently unseizable and beyond itself. The greater the unattainability the more intensely is the desire heightened; but for the most part it is intent on satisfying its own self-seeking and egoistic demands, heedless of the true goal and innermost aspiration of man. Thus has Mind chiefly come to operate under the direction and instigation of its central ego-faculty,—a narrow and jealously guarded power in man, which by the mind's increasing development has become the main stumbling block in the way of his higher advancement.

It is only beyond the entities of Life and Mind that we can begin to

contact in its original freedom and self-mastery that absolute Force which is compressed within Matter, and the inexhaustible Energy which Life widely dissipates and squanders, and that Power of awareness which Mind has distorted for its own self-centred aggrandisement. Consequently it is only by that greater Power, operating in its own right, that those compressed atomic forces can be fully released and controlled. And similarly the distortions of Ignorance can, by the full operation of that Power, be transformed into a true Knowledge, and the unruly fire of Desire changed into the pure flame of aspiration. But the seed of the Supramental Power is already secreted in man as the potential centre of growth into the Gnostic or fully Conscious Being, and its subliminal Force is even now pressing down to germinate that seed and bring it out fully and openly into the life of the world. We realise thus that the Descent is a necessary and essential condition for Ascent; it is the fulfilment, in fact, of an aspiration and conscious endeavour here below. Furthermore, the dynamic centre of the individual being, which is as yet immature, contains many possibilities and potentialities, and therefore requires the living presence of its own native Power and Matrix, acting in its pristine Purity and Freedom, in order to give the example and the necessary protection to assure its right growth and development. In a similar way there had been the need of the Creation of an Adam—or should we say Adams, since it is inconceivable that one solitary primal being appeared?—as the God-given completed Human who formed the model and pattern by which Man could be raised progressively from the animal level.

For the fulfilment of this gradual unfoldment of the universe, it is clear that the individual centres are the essential instruments of action. It is the individual who expresses externally through life, that all-pervading Consciousness which would otherwise be diffused throughout the entire expanse of Cosmos; and it is precisely because of this infinite diffusion that the finite concentration is necessary to produce an effective centre of manifestation. Without the individual the universe would remain but an infinite expanse, a static Creation devoid of a growing-point. But just as the universe needs the dynamic centre of growth, so the individual needs the broad expansiveness of the universe as the field and ground of his development. Man comes to realise that he is not only an integral part of Cosmos, but that it is solely through his constant interaction and participation in its entire movement, that he is able to carry out God's Will in the world. And furthermore, not only is the universe his foundation and field of action, but confined strictly within the limits of Life and Mind, as he is at present, he is forced to strive beyond these limitations if he is

to universalise himself, and so manifest the divine All. But this self-widening into the impersonal does not mean the loss of essential personality,—his true inner Person. It is indeed through the realisation of that greater Self that man can rise above the blind dynamic urge, which we ordinarily call Nature. Of all earthly Creation it is man alone who can erect, through an increasingly conscious endeavour, a regulated order and harmony, a purposeful aim out of what is but a blind and coerced activity. This indeed is man's real work in the world, and for which God has chosen him as His direct instrument.

We can readily see that it is through the higher reaches of mind, and from intuitive flashes beyond mind, that man first discerns something of the higher levels to which he must climb. But within him there is already a greater principle than mind, though yet latent and seed-like. This is his soul-entity and true personality,—the seed of the Divine Nature which has but sought the animal body as the foundation of a Divine Life on earth. Thus even man's mental life of abstract thought, aesthetic feeling and conscious endeavour is but the intermediary stage of a yet higher progression; for it is only through the awakened soul that he can really seize in their fullness the higher Truths of his existence. Awakened then to a profounder self-knowledge man begins to conceive some formula, and some formulation of the ideal that he has to manifest. At first his aim vacillates between two possibilities. Is the Beyond with its Power, Light and Bliss—and which seems so remotely unattainable in this earthly life—the one Truth and goal of Existence? Or is the shadowy darkness here below his true habitat and sole reality? For here in the world it is only the direct opposites of those higher ideals which constantly confront him. Not Immortality but death is the seeming end of things; not Truth but error and falsehood are the ever-recurring factors of his life; not Love and Beatitude but sorrow, pain and evil are the constant companions of his way. Amidst this conflict and turmoil how can man perceive God, except as a Being infinitely remote? For only the dark shadows of those deeper aspirations flit across his path to become the harsh realities of his earthly life. Thus weighed down with the labour and constant demands of life, he all too readily feels the urge to cut himself off finally and have done with the ignorance of the world. And he becomes appeased by the thought that this life is but a transitory stage-play, or perhaps some gigantic cosmic dream of a Universal Mind. In the same way that the transcendent face of the Divine Nature in its unseizable vastness appears at first to negate the world, so the worldly body of the ineffable Supreme comes to belie the very existence of our idealised conception of a Perfection beyond. Or if we accept God and the Beyond as the one ultimate

Reality, we forthwith reject the world as fundamentally unreal or transitory. But as we have already discarded the apparent illusion of the Transcenden vision of the world, so we must push aside this alternative evasion of our difficulties as an escape from the problem and a shunning of our real work in the world. For these opposites of the ultimate ideal are the very material of life's working, and our attitude towards them results from a false view of what the individual function is really intended to be. From a broader standpoint we see that the present nature of man and the world—the pain, suffering and evil—are but the conditions of man's progress. They are not by any means his inevitable earthly fate or destiny, the consequences of a fall, but constitute the primary conditions of the work he has yet to fulfil.

It is out of these errors and aberrations of the world, and even by their aid, that the true relation of things has to be found. The prevalence of evil and ignorance is in fact the very spur that goads man to realise some degree of Truth and Bliss not yet attained. The imperfections of the world are also a check which retard a too hasty or impatient advance. By drawing one back continually into the maelstrom of life, one is compelled to face the very need of perfecting all the imperfections. It is only, however, when the narrow self-centredness of man's present outlook has been broadened into some measure of God-consciousness, that he gains the real protection which guards him against complete submersion in that surging stream of life. And it is by that God-consciousness too, that he can receive the sure guidance to enable him to establish a basis for the ultimate transformation of suffering into Beatitude, error into Truth, evil into Good, and all this imperfect Nature into the Perfection of the Divine Reality. But how, it may be asked, can these hard realities of the world possibly be converted into that which is so remote and infinitely beyond all earthly existence? Surely those high ideals belong to some other sphere, some other-worldly abode, than this terrestrial globe. But even in face of these assailing doubts, deeper experiences, in the quietude of the soul, assure and convince us that the essence of those remote Truths is ever an omnipresent Reality, the most intimate possession of our being as well as the innermost centre of things around. And consequently the Perfection and the imperfections are not essentially contraries, but are manifestations of One Reality. Although it is out of the lower that the Higher must emerge, ultimately it is by the Higher that the lower is effectually raised. Such is the supreme principle which traverses and directs the whole of the evolutionary ascent; and through it the individual efforts of peace are actualised.

It is clear now that our failure to discern the secret Divine Essence in things, only seeing the opposites of their inherent divinity, arises from some

fundamental fault and aberration in our own make-up, as an inseparable part of the universal Nature; and this distorts our own perception of things. We do not recognise the Divine Nature because it is clouded and obscured by an Ignorance, a distorting Maya, which we normally cannot penetrate. But accepting this fundamental Ignorance of the world as the real—though removable—bar to our right perception of Truth, we can begin to view it systematically in its correct perspective. It is not by hastily brushing it aside, but first by self-purification, making of oneself a more rarefied medium through which the higher Light can act, that one gains a clearer perception Furthermore, it is only by accepting the Ignorance that we can eventually transform it into a means of expressing the Divine outwardly and visibly in the world, bringing out the latent potentialities of the hidden Divine Nature of things. To do this we must boldly probe beneath the surface and outer appearances, and be unafraid to plunge into the unfathomable depths of Consciousness. Through this wider Consciousness, and in accordance with the Will of the Supreme, we must be prepared also to identify ourselves with states of being other than our own. At first, however, we perceive but flickering and intermittent flashes of Truth, which can only be represented symbolically. Some of the highest expressions in art, poetry and religious feeling are of this category. But as one's perception becomes more strongly founded in this wider Consciousness, one begins to see more integrally and more comprehensively, in relation to life as a whole, something of that supreme Plan of which the individual is the significant instrument of endeavour. It is then that the all-pervasive God-consciousness can begin to open up and bring its revealing Light into the darker recesses of our half-illumined mind.

NATHANIEL PEARSON

THE MOTHER ON YOGIC ACTION

(IV)

"WHO is the real doer of a perfect Yogic action? Is it the purified and surrendered ego of the individual under the direct influence of the soul? Is it the soul itself? Or, is it the Divine?" This is one of the most momentous questions in the philosophy of Yogic action, and we propose to consider it here in the light of the Mother's teachings.

It goes without saying that the ego cannot be the doer of a pure Yogic action. The ego acts from desire, however subtly disguised it may be or refined and noble in its character, but the one indispensable pre-condition of a pure Yogic action is that it must be absolutely disinterested and desireless. If the ego is ruled out, is the soul then the doer? Some schools of dynamic Yoga will reply in the affirmative. They will say that the liberated soul, detached from and superior to Nature, does the Yogic action. Others may go a step further and assert that the liberated soul, the Jivanmukta, living in the Divine, can be said to be the doer in the sense that it is the channel of the divine Will, but, really speaking, it is the Divine Himself who is the sole and sovereign doer of all action. Both these views are true, because they are based on experiences which cannot be impugned; but what they skip over is the dynamic nucleus or the active centralising agency in the frontal part of the nature and its contribution or non-contribution to the Yogic action. In other words, does the ego completely fade out of the individual nature or does it persist even when the soul is in command? With the blunt, disarming candour characteristic of him, Sri Ramakrishna says, "If the obstinate ego would not go, well, let it then remain as a servant of God." The implication is unmistakable that the ego does not altogether disappear out of the nature of the liberated individual, but persists, subdued and surrendered, it may be, enlightened and widened in consciousness, but essentially separative and self-assertive. This view lends colour to the widespread belief that so long as the body is there, some kind of "I"ness or the ego is bound to persist in the nature parts of even a liberated man. The physical knot of egoism, it is held, can be dissolved only when the body

drops and the soul departs from the earthly life. The Vedantic ideal of the Jivanmukta (liberated in life) is not quite explicit about the actual state of the active physical consciousness of the liberated man. That his soul remains detached, impersonal, unaffected by the mutations of Nature, which it observes but with which it does not identify itself, admits of no possible doubt; but what about his outer personality, that part of his surfact nature which is rivetted to the sense-bound separative "I"? There is nothing definite and conclusive in the Upanishads to prove that Janak's outer nature too was as much liberated as his soul and that his physical consciousness was as much universalised and impersonalised as his spiritual. A purified, quieted and controlled physical consciousness may reflect to a certain extent the light and bliss of the soul, but, as the experience of many of the greatest Yogis testifies, the inherent egoism of the body-consciousness remains or recurs, and the sub-conscient welter is always there to surprise the soul by its sporadic surges. In Sri Chaitanya's case we find a victorious humility beating the veils of the ego to a frazzle, but still the frazzle remained and betrayed itself in his occasional over-eagerness to abase himself to the dust and his not infrequent spurts of ascetic severity towards himself and his disciples. Only in the state of the Mahabhava did the ego completely vanish, leaving the whole being in the possession of the Divine. Totapuri's sudden flare-up at a stranger's asking for a brand from his fire to light his tobacco was not so much an outburst of anger as of the sub-conscient ego which had managed to survive his soul's liberation and which now revolted at the impudent audacity of the boorish stranger in asking for a brand from his—Totapuri's!—fire. In Vishwamitra's case we have the classical example of the leech-like tenacity of the ego asserting itself in the wake of every spiritual achievement.

It is perhaps the Gita alone that holds out the great hope of a full and harmonious divine living, *sarvatha yogi mayi vartate*, wholly free from the taint of the ego, nirahankara. It promises to its follower an abiding God-union in and through life's manifold activities. But how that is to be accomplished, by what supreme transmutation of the basic stuff of human nature, it does not explain. It confines itself to the synthetic teaching that by the elimination of all desires and an integral self-giving to the Divine alone through knowledge, works and love, one can come to do the works of the liberated, *muktasya karma*, or the divine action, *divyam karma*, unhindered and unharassed by the ego. Here we must pause to clarify two points: first, whether the ego which is rooted in the sub-soil of our being, can be grubbed out and cast away by the discipline of the Gita and, second, whether a desireless, impersonal action is all that a perfect Yogic action means.

The spiritual discipline of the Gita is, indeed, a most powerfully synthetic discipline for a divine life-effectuation and life-fulfilment; but the most radically effective steps of it, the steps of the crucial transition from the human to the Divine, have been left in obscurity, as a mystery to be resolved in personal experience. But the modern mind insists on elaboration and elucidation. It wants to know what this supreme path is before it resolves to venture upon it. It wants to have a clear idea of what constitutes a Yogic action—who is the real doer of the divine works and what is the place and function of the individual soul and its nature in them. It has understood that the ego has to go, lock, stock and barrel; but, how, it asks, so long as the gross physical body is there and the ego's roots thrive in the fertile fields of the subconscient? Has it ever been achieved except in trance or a deeply indrawn state of human consciousness? Is there any spiritual discipline by which not only the conscious parts of the nature, but also the subconscient and the inconscient can be thoroughly cleansed of even the last, lingering vestiges of the ego and transferred to the sole charge of the Divine? Can the lower human nature of the three shackling qualitative modes, *gunas*, be raised and converted into the divine Nature, *para prakriti?* Can man become wholly divine, not only in his inner, but also in his outermost consciousness and being, even in his secular personality?

The second point which has to be clarified before we proceed to a detailed consideration of all the above issues, is whether a desireless, impersonal action is all that a consummate Yogic action means. The end of Yogic action is the perfect fulfilment of the Will of the Divine, which is a will to self-manifestation. The attunement of the will of the individual to the Will of the Divine is, therefore, the indispensable condition of this fulfilment, and this attunement must be integral, that is to say, it must be an attunement of the will of each part of the individual to the Will of the Divine. Now, a desireless, impersonal, passive consciousness can let the divine Will work itself out, but this passivity, however luminous and blissful it may be, reduces the soul to a will-less channel and its instrumental nature to an automaton. There is no active participation or collaboration of the individual in the work of the Divine, no rapture of the dynamic union. That cannot surely be the intention of the Divine in the individual. In a pure and perfect Yogic action the individual soul with its integrated and transformed nature must be an active agent and participant in the divine action, each part of its being, in tune with the others and in tune with the Divine, developed to its utmost perfection and responding to every touch of the divine Force. In the midst of its passivity it must be a vibrating dynamo of divine activity, in the midst of its

impersonality it must preserve a unified and powerful personality, and its desirelessenss must be, not a blank of luminous repose, but a vast, thrilled arsenal of the supreme creative Will and its hurtling energies.

In the Prayer of the 17th April, 1914, the Mother makes it abundantly clear that no part of the human nature has to be coerced or repressed or weakened; each has its distinct place and function proper to it and indispensable to the harmonious working of the organic whole. What is to be totally expunged is the ego, the separative "I"ness and "my"ness which insulates the individual from the universal and condemns him to ignorance and incapacity.

"O Lord, O almighty Master, sole Reality, grant that no error, no obscurity, no fatal ignorance may creep into my heart and my thought.

In action, the personality is the inevitable and indispensable intermediary of Thy will and Thy force.

The stronger, the more complex, powerful, individualised and conscious is the personality, the more powerfully and usefully can the instrument serve. But, by reason of the very character of personality, it easily tends to be drawn into the fatal illusion of its separate existence and become little by little a screen between Thee and that on which Thou willest to act. Not at the beginning, in the manifestation, but in the transmission of the return; that is to say, instead of being, as a faithful servant, an intermediary who brings back to Thee exactly what is Thy due—the forces sent forth in reply to Thy action—there is a tendency in the personality to want to keep for itself a part of the forces, with this idea: "It is I who have done this or that, I who am thanked....." Pernicious illusion, obscure falsehood, now are you discovered and unmasked. This is the maleficent canker corroding the fruit of the action, falsifying all its results.

O Lord, O my sweet Master, sole Reality, dispel this feeling of the "I". I have now understood that so long as there will be a manifested universe, the "I" will remain necessary for Thy manifestation; to dissolve, or even to diminish or weaken the "I", is to deprive Thee of the means of manifestation, in whole or part. But what must be radically and definitively suppressed, is the illusory thought, the illusory feeling, the illusory sensation of the separate "I". At no moment, in no circumstances must we forget that our "I" has no reality outside Thee.

O my sweet Master, my divine Lord, tear out from my heart this illusion that Thy servant may become pure and faithful, and faithfully and integrally bring back to Thee all that is Thy due. In silence let me contemplate and understand this supreme ignorance and dispel it for ever. Chase the shadow from my heart and let Thy light reign in it, its uncontested sovereign."

This Prayer focuses our attention on five cardinal principles of Yogic action:—

1) "In action the personality is the inevitable and indispensable intermediary of Thy Will and Thy forces."

2) "The stronger, the more complex, powerful, individualised and conscious is the personality, the more powerfully and usefully can the instrument serve."

3) "So long as there will be a manifested universe, the "I" will remain necessary for Thy manifestation..."

4) "To dissolve or even to diminish or weaken the "I" is to deprive Thee of the means of manifestation, in whole or part."

5) "What must be radically and definitively suppressed, is the illusory thought, the illusory feeling, the illusory sensation of the separate "I". At no moment, in no circumstances must we forget that our "I" has no reality outside Thee."

These revolutionary ideas give a remarkable definiteness and precision to the ideal of the Yogic action as set forth by the Mother. The human personality has not to be merged in the Impersonal, but carefully preserved, organised, reinforced and harmoniously developed; only it has to be purified of all taint and perversion of the ego. A supremely conscious, complex and firmly individualised personality is the best "intermediary of the divine Will", if the "I" in it is not the little, limited separative "I", but the transcendent and universal "I" who is without a second. Through such impersonal personalities alone can the Divine affirm His inalienable unity in diversity and yet make each diversity, each finite form a facet and an aspect, a manifesting mould and a mirror of His formless Infinity. To weaken the "I" is to deprive the Divine of the means of His manifestation, for, how then will the Divine declare Himself and reveal His glory in myriad forms, saying in each of them, "Here am I, my initial intention of becoming many and yet remaining the indivisible One has been fulfilled."?

The "I" will then remain,—without it there can be no reception and transmission of the divine Will and the divine forces—but it will become the transcendent and universal "I", the one "I" conscious of itself in all forms and powerful to achieve everything. The blind, sense-embedded, separate "I" will disappear for ever, even from the physical consciousness, even from the subconscient. This supreme consummation, unrealised by man up to the present day, but inevitable as the crown of his evolutionary endeavour, will be possible by a descent of the transforming Light of the Divine into the very cells of the body, even into the submerged parts of

our being, as some of the Mother's experiences in the "Prayers and Meditations" illustrate. We do not propose to deal with the long and steep work of transformation here;[1] for our present purpose it is enough to maintain that the ego can be completely excised from the entire being and consciousness of man and the Divine installed there as the unveiled doer of all Yogic action. What was left cryptic in the Gita's conception of the Yogic action and missed by some dynamic Yogas that miscarried, has been clearly expounded by the Mother and Sri Aurobindo and reduced to a comprehensive, synthetic and flexible system—the steps of the Spirit override all rigour and routine—which, whoever feels called, can follow to its glorious end.

Describing the state of the liberated individual being, living in the Divine and exclusively devoted to His work, the Mother says, "To be immersed at once in Thee and in Thy work..... To be no longer a limited individual .....to become the infinitude of Thy forces manifesting through a point .....to be delivered from all trammels and all limitations.....to rise above all restricting thought.....to act and be beyond the act.....to act through and for individuals but see only the oneness, the oneness of Thy Love, Thy Knowledge and Thy Being....."[2] An egoless, impersonal, individual consciousness, basing and supporting God-impelled action through the transfigured natural personality and its sublimated faculties, each in its place and at its proper task, none depressed or repressed or neglected, but all harmoniously organised and divinely used—this is the perfection of Yogic action as experienced by the Mother and held up before man as the highest spiritual ideal to be realised in life. This dynamic divine union is not only a "simple and perceived contact of the substance of the soul with that of the Divine", as Coventry Patmore describes "the most perfect form of contemplation", but it is also a constant union and communion between the transmuted substance of the individual body with the infinite luminous substance of the divine Existence. It was perhaps some such integral dynamic ideal that was in the background of the Upanishadic verses:—

"Know the body for a chariot and the soul for the master of the driving, the lower mind for the reins and the higher mind for the charioteer who driveth.

[1] It has been dealt with in our article "THE MOTHER ON TRANSFORMATION" in the *Mother India* of August 19, 1950.

[2] *Prayers and Meditations*, p. 104.

"The senses are the steeds of the soul and the objects of their action are the paths in which they gallop; for there is one who is yoked with soul and mind and senses, and he is that which enjoyeth, say the thinkers."[1]

"There is one who is yoked with soul and mind and senses" evidently refers to the One without a second, the only Existent, the sole Reality, the Divine, who becomes on earth the overt doer of all Yogic action. And this interpretation is confirmed by the first verse of the same part of the Upanishad:—

"There are two that drink deep of the truth of works well done in the world: they are lodged in the heart of the creatures and in the highest half of the most high is their dwelling." As of light and shade God-knowers speak of them....."

An ascent of the integrated consciousness of the individual to the supreme Truth-Consciousness, *rita-chit*, of the Divine by an absolute and integral aspiration and self-surrender induces a delivering and transforming descent of the *rita-chit* into the whole being of man, and it is this *rita-chit* that becomes the doer of all actions, *kritsna karmakrit*, in the liberated individual who enjoys immortality "by birth" and works in this terrestrial existence. The end of human life is not flight or extinction, but immortality in creative delight.

RISHABHCHAND

[1] *Kathopanishad*, part 1, chapt. 3

THE MOTHER'S MESSAGE OF 15th AUGUST 1950

OUR sadhana has reached a stage in which we are mostly dealing with the subconscient and even the inconscient. As a consequence the physical determinism has taken a predominant position bringing an increase of difficulties on the way which have to be faced with an increase of courage and determination.

In any case, whatever happens and whatever you do, do not allow FEAR to invade you. At the slightest touch of it, react and call for help.

You must learn not to identify with your body and treat it as a young child who needs to be convinced that it must not fear.

FEAR is the greatest of all enemies and we must overcome it here, once for all.

The Mother

There are four points in this very important message, which we should understand clearly and keep fixed in our consciousness, if we would profit by the Mother's teaching and progress in the present difficult stage of the sadhana.

1) The Mother speaks, first, of the two specific parts or ranges of our being on which the purifying and transforming power of the integral Yoga is at present directed—they are the subconscient and the inconscient. It is not in the surface mind or the vital of man that the most obstinate obstacles to his spiritual perfection are concentrated; these parts, being more or less conscious and evolved, do not resist for long the action of the divine Force; but it is in the subconscient and the inconscient, where all the obscure elements of our lower nature have their stronghold and base of obstructive operations. In those unlit or half-lit regions of chaotic impressions, blind instincts, anarchical impulses, stark falsehood, heaving appetites and somnambulist or inert swirl of energies, which contribute to most of our dreams, nightmares and psycho-somatic morbidities, there are infinite treasures of the Spirit hidden from our consciousness and guarded by the powers of darkness. These treasures have to be won back and those realms to be annexed to our waking consciousness; otherwise we shall

be repeating the traditional achievement of a partial and superficial purification of our nature, leaving its foundations under the unmitigated sway of Ignorance and Inconscience. No dynamic Yoga, aiming at a radical transfiguration of the whole of human life upon earth, can succeed without an invasion, conquest, illumination and conversion of the subconscient and the inconscient. In our Yoga the conquest of the inconscient is almost as important as the conquest of the Superconscient.

2) But this invasion is sure to be met by a prolonged and resolute resistance. The physical determinism which rules the earth-nature will assert itself with a vengeful violence and make a desperate bid for survival. What is physical determinism, it may be asked. Determinism is a rigid chain of cause and effect, an inflexible sequence of action and reaction. The predominance of the physical determinism, of which the Mother speaks in the message, is the implacable veto of the material Nature against the introduction of a higher law or a higher rhythm. Let us illustrate this point. If I get drenched by rain, I catch cold; if I sleep less, I feel indisposed; if I work more, I feel tired; if I eat less, I feel weak. All these, together with disease, decay and death, are the results of physical determinism—the body, or the vital-physical forces acting in the body, determine this fixed sequence of reactions. But if we want to break this rigid chain, change this fixed sequence, override this leaden yoke of Matter by a higher power, there is very likely to be, in the beginning at least, some disturbance or struggle in the physical system. What should we do in such a case? Should we impose our mental or vital will on the recalcitrant body and strive to coerce it into submission? The result is sure to be disastrous. The cog of a machine cannot reverse the rhythm of the machine or alter its mechanism—it can only damage it by an ignorant interference. What we should do is to "call for help", as the Mother advises us in the message. This "call for help" is at once an invocation and an opening to the Mother's force to enter into our physical organism, penetrate down to its nether base, the subconscient and the inconscient, and effect a thorough metamorphosis in the poise and functioning of the physical being. It is the Mother's force alone that, by virtue of its subtler and far superior dynamism, can sustain and replenish our body whenever it flags or tires, train it to stand foursquare agsint all attacks and deliver it from its subjection to the physical determinism. It is her force alone that can promote a progressive radiance and resilience in the physical cells, an inexhaustible strength and buoyancy in the nervous system and a general physical transformation culminating in the fourfold perfection of which Sri Aurobindo speaks in his "Synthesis of Yoga": *mahatwa*, *bala*, *laghuta* and *dharana samarthya*—"a greatness of

sustaining force, an abounding strength, energy and puissance of outgoing and managing force, a lightness, swiftness and adaptability of the nervous and physical being, a holding and responsive power in the whole physical machine and its driving springs."

The "call for help" is probably the most important point in the message. There must be an immediate and instinctive call and a ready receptivity, for, without them there can be no replacing of the physical determinism by the free and flexible working of the Supramental force in the human body. No mental or vital force can make the body immune and invulnerable and a powerful instrument of the Divine.

3) Whenever, in consequence of the Mother's working in our body to emancipate it from its bondage to physical determinism, there is a slight disturbance or a temporary depression, fear rushes in to possess the body. It induces a shrinking of our consciousness, mental, vital and physical, before an advancing emergency. It clouds and confuses our intelligence, stuns our vitality and shuts the door against the Mother's protecting and delivering force. We must, therefore, cast out all fear from our consciousness, especially from the body-consciousness, and fill it with courage and an unfailing confidence in the Divine Grace. Faith and fear do not go together; if we have faith in the Mother's force, we must become absolutely impervious to fear. A seeker of the Divine must be able to defy danger and death encountering him on his path.

4) The fourth point is that we must not identify ourselves with the body which is not our only or most fundamental reality. It has an instrumental and not an essential importance. Our detachment from it will give us a sort of superiority to its habitual mechanism and a power to train it to expel and repel all fear. Usually the body is full of fears—fear of disease, fear of death, fear of accidents, fear of weakness and suffering,—besides labouring under the inherent limitations and incapacities which are the legacy of its inconscient origin. It has to be trained, as one trains a child, not to fear, not to flinch before the advancing foe, but maintain a calm and invincible faith in the protection of the Mother's force.

A constant and spontaneous call and openness of our physical being to the Mother's force and a patient and vigilant training of the body to be supple and free from fear and transcend the physical determinism, is the pith of the Mother's message, which marks a crucial stage in our sadhana and promises a definite advance towards a decisive conquest of the subconscient and the inconscient.

RISHABHCHAND

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF POETIC GENIUS

MANY poets have recognised an invisible mysterious source of inspiration beyond their conscious mind but they could not exactly understand its nature. The only thing about which they were certain was that whatever came from this profounder region of their being was natural and superior in insight to the one produced by the conscious mind. Thus Myers observes, "Genius should be regarded as a power of utilising a wider range than other men can utilise of faculties in some degree innate in all; so that an 'inspiration of genius' will be in truth a subliminal uprush, an emergence into the current of ideas which the man is consciously manipulating...". Shelley wrote, "Poetry is created by that imperial faculty whose throne is curtained within the invisible nature of man." Lowell (in *Columbus*) speaks of some central deep from which the poets write:

> "And I believe the poets; it is they who utter wisdom from the central deep,
> And listening to the inner flow of things
> Speak to the age out of eternity."

Carlyle distinguishes the thinking of the conscious surface mind which he calls artificial from the creation of the 'quiet mysterious depths' of the unconscious which he calls the natural. He writes: "Of our thinking, we might say, it is but the mere upper surface that we shape into articulate thought; underneath the region of argument and conscious discourse, lies the region of meditation; here in its quiet mysterious depths, dwells what vital force is in us; here, if aught is to be created and not merely manufactured and communicated must the work go on. Manufacture is intelligible but trivial; creation is great, and cannot be understood. Thus if the debater and demonstrator whom we may rank as the lowest of true thinkers, knows what he has done and how he did it, the artist whom we rank as the highest, knows not, must speak of inspiration, and in one or the other dialect, call his work the gift of divinity." (*Essay-Characteristics*) Again,

Wordsworth in the following lines of *Prelude*—Book 2—points out the poor nature of conscious thought:

> "That false secondary power
> By which we multiply distinctions, then
> Deem that our puny boundaries are things
> That we perceive, and not that we have made"

and of its product, Science, as a makeshift:

> "Not as our glory and our absolute boast,
> But as a succedaneum, and a prop
> To our infirmity."

The attempts made by psycho-analysts in literature to fathom the 'quiet mysterious depths' of poetic inspiration also fail to satisfy us, for they have dismissed it by calling it as the unconscious mind. Thus Prescott in his book, *The Poetic Mind*, identifies the Muse with the unconscious mind. He writes, "Invocation to the Muse is only a solicitation of the unconscious mind." He explains all visions of the invisible world as materials derived from the unconscious source. About Poe's idea of supernal beauty he observes, "When Poe, for example, says that beauty not that of reality but a supernal beauty is the end of poetical creation, he doubtless has in mind a quality belonging to material derived from this unconscious source." He holds that material comes from both the conscious and unconscious source. But it is mainly the latter "which gives to poetry its peculiar and inexplicable character." A poet utilises mainly the material furnished by the unconscious. The unconscious mind is thus defined: "it means a part of mind which cannot be utilized or controlled voluntarily and whose content cannot be recovered by the memory in voluntary thought—which, however, does apparently often carry on a part of the operation in the second mode of thought, and whose content is drawn upon in that thought. It is important especially in furnishing materials for poetry—as also for dreams and other productions of the imaginations."

The entire account is clouded in the mists of the unconscious. It fails to grip our understanding and only serves to point out the need of a new psychology of poetic creation founded upon a deeper insight of living experience. Such a psychology is provided by the poetic eye of Sri Aurobindo who, far from calling it the unconscious source, writes about those planes of creation as if they are native to his consciousness and holds that great poetry

can be written only by being perfectly conscious of the so-called mysterious planes from which the inspiration comes. He calls it not the unconscious but the superconscient source. Moreover, he has exactly defined the various levels of the so-called unconscious source and has not summarily comprehended them all in one word (superconscient). His masterly analysis of the entire psychology of poetic creation is something unparallelled in the history of literary criticism. Never before has any critic exceeded even the unfailing exactitude of the probing surgeon's knife as Sri Aurobindo in the examination of the most profound subtleties of a poet's 'quiet mysterious depths.' He has gone to the very fount of creation, the planes from which the inspiration flows and is not tied down merely to the inner nature of the poet.

He thus points out the inadequacy of all such accounts in "The Future Poetry", "We take little account of the psychology of poetic genius and are content with saying that the word of the poet is the speech of the imagination or that he worked by an inspiration. But this is an insufficient account; for imagination is of many different kinds and inspiration touches the mind at different levels and breaks out through different media before it issues through the gates of the creative imagination. What we mean by inspiration is that the impetus to poetic creation and utterance comes to us from a superconscient source above the ordinary mentality, so that what is written seems not to be the fabrication of the brain-mind, but something more sovereign breathed or poured in from above. That is the possession by the divine enthousiasmos of which Plato has spoken."[1]

What is still more remarkable is the wonderful discriminative insight with which he distinguishes one verse from another by assigning to them their distinct levels of inspiration. Thus of the following lines of Wordsworth:

> "The cataracts blow their trumpets from the steep;
> No more shall grief of mine the seasons wrong;
> I hear the echoes through the mountains throng;
> The winds come to me from the fields of sleep."

he writes, "it is precisely the overmind movement that is wanting; in the last line there is something of the overmind substance expressed not directly but through the highest intuitive consciousness and because it is not direct the overmind rhythm is absent."

[1] *Vide* chapter entitled 'Recent Engiish Poetry, 3'.

"As for the overmind rhythm and inspiration we get nearer to it in another line of Wordsworth, but I do not remember it exactly and I may misquote,—

> "And marble face, the index of a mind
> Voyaging through strange sees of thought"[1]

or a line like Milton's

> "These thoughts that wander through eternity."[2]

Shelley's poetry he characterises mainly as of psychic inspiration but there is nothing in it of the overhead note. Thus of his famous stanza:—

> We look before and after
> And pine for what is not;
> Our sincerest laugher
> With some pain is fraught;
> Our sweetest songs are those
> that tell of saddest thought"

he writes, "This is perfect poetry with the most exquisite melody and beauty of wording and an unsurpassable poignancy of pathos, but there is no touch or note of the overhead inspiration: it is the mind and the heart, the vital emotion, working at their highest pitch under the stress of a psychic inspiration. The rhythm is of the same character, a direct, straightforward, lucid and lucent movement welling out limpidly straight from the psychic source."[3] At another place in a letter to Sri Dilip he writes of Shelley's other lines:—

> I can give not what men call love,
> But wilt thou accept not
> The worship the heart lifts above
> And the Heavens reject not,—

[1] The exact lines are:

> .....and silent face,
> The marble index of a mind for ever
> Voyaging through strange seas of Thought alone.
> (*The Prelude*, Book III.)

[2] A letter to Amal Kiran.

[3] Mystic Poetry—*Sri Aurobindo Mandir Annual*, No. 5.

The desire of the moth for the star,
Of the night for the morrow,—
The devotion to something afar
From the sphere of our sorrow?"

that "it would be perhaps impossible to find in English literature a more perfect example of psychic inspiration than those eight lines."

One cannot conceive of any critic ancient or modern who has understood the spirit of a few lines or passages of a poem to such an extent as to go to the length of tracing their very source to a particular chamber of the muse or the level of inspiration in which they were created.

It is with the same keen vision of a seer-critic that he examines the psychology of Milton's poetry which is ordinarily spoken of as the best example of sublimity in English poetry, but Sri Aurobindo is not content with such a vague general term which hardly takes us very far. He holds that it is a mistake to characterise his poetry as having the overhead complexion. "In mental poetry", he writes, "there are derivations or substitutes for the manner of the Higher Thought. It is easy for the mind to mistake and take the higher for the lower inspiration or vice versa. Thus Milton's lines:

"Of man's first disobedience
And the fruit of that forbidden tree"

or

"On evil days though fallen, and evil tongues"

might at first sight be taken, because of a certain depth of emotion in their large lingering rhythm, as having the overhead complexion, but this rhythm loses something of its sovereign right because there are no depths of sense behind it. It conveys nothing but the noble and dignified pathos of the blindness and old age of a great personality fallen into evil days. Milton's architecture of thought and verse is high and powerful and massive, but there are usually no subtle echoes there, no deep chambers: the occult things in men's being are foreign to his intelligence—for it is in the light of the poetic intelligence that he works. He does not stray into 'the mystic cavern of the heart', does not follow the inner fire entering like a thief with the cow of of Light into the secret of secrecies."[1]

Thus according to Sri Aurobindo Milton's *Paradise Lost*, in spite of its mighty amplitude of epic expression and sublimity, is mainly

[1] Mystic Poetry—*Sri Aurobindo Mandir Annual*, No. 5.

intellectual thought—utterance which though poetic should not be mistaken for the very height of poetic inspiration. In 'Future Poetry'[1] he thus writes of the poet, "he has given English poetic speech a language of intellectual thought which is of itself highly poetic without depending in the least on any of the formal aids of poetic expression except those which are always essential and indispensable, a speech which is in its very grain poetry and in its very grain intellectual thought-utterance."

Shakespeare's inspiration he characterises as of the life-soul though in certain individual lines he attains the level of the illumined mind. He thus observes, "Shakespeare's poetry coruscated with a play of the hues of imagination which we may regard as a mental substitute for the inspiration of the illumined mind and sometimes by aiming at an exalted note he links on to the illumined overhead inspiration itself as in the lines:—

> 'Wilt thou upon the high and giddy mast
> Seal up the shipboy's eyes and rock his brains
> In cradle of the rude imperious surge?'

Unlike Milton Shakespeare does sometimes get into 'the mystic cavern of the heart,' the deep chambers of man's being, as if by a splendid psychic accident in spite of his preoccupation with the colours and shows of life."[2]

The muse of his own pupils also does not escape his psychological analysis. About Sri Dilip Kumar's poetry he writes, "it is the origin source of Dilip's inspiration and the goodwill of his vital (emotional) channel that makes his poetry so spontaneous; the psychic inspiration takes at once its true form and speech in the vital and is transmitted without any interference or only a minimum of interference by the brain-mind. That is usually the character of the lyric inspiration—(Dilip's gift is essentially lyrical) to flow out of the being—whether it comes from the vital or the psychic, it is usually spontaneous, for these are the two most powerfully impelling and spontaneous parts of the nature." He further distinguishes the originating source of Sri Amal Kiran's poetry from that of Sri Dilip's. To the former he writes, "Your source is, on the contrary, the creative (poetic) intelligence and, at your best, the illumined mind, but always apt to be arrested by the outer intellect."

(*Late*) JAGADISH SARAN AGRAWAL

[1] *Vide* chapter entitled 'The Course of English Poetry, 4'. Mystic Poetry—*Sri Aurobindo Mandir Annual*, No. 5.

THE GURU IN SPIRITUAL LIFE

"DEAR is Plato, but dearer still is truth"—thus is Aristotle said to have expressed himself regarding his venerable teacher Plato. That, we think, sums up in a line the innate relation in the West between the teacher and the disciple, at its highest. In the West a teacher has no traditional claims for regard and fealty as in the East. He holds the same position in society as any other professional or perhaps a technician whose services are sought for special purposes. His equipment is to be made use of as far and as best as possible. His position is analogous to that of a ladder. Considerations of loyalty, sentiment do not come into the relation. Outside the class-room, the student and the teacher meet as Mr. Brown and Mr. Thomas. Individualism is a marked trait of Western upbringing and any relation that involves the subordination or surrender of one's individuality to another is anathema to one brought up in that line. No wonder the peculiar relation that obtains between the teacher and the taught in the East strikes such a mind as something objectionable. For in the East, the teacher is not merely a pedagogue. He is one to whose care the interests of the student as a whole are entrusted. He is regarded as one who moulds the mind of the pupil and shapes his life in a more effective way than the parents themselves. The personal relation that is encouraged and springs up between him and his charge is the lever round which rotates the entire experiment. This is particularly so in spiritual life in the East where the Guru or the Master occupies a key position. It is accepted as an axiomatic truth that no novice can enter deep into the path of the spirit and progress unless he is initiated and helped forward by one who is, to say the least, already on the path. The novice trusts himself to the Guide in whose word and power he has implicit faith, renders into his hands the clay of his being to be shaped into the form of fulfilment. He holds back nothing and in the measure in which this whole-hearted relation is established in full freedom, the Sadhana or the course of the discipline runs towards its fruition. The objection that one loses individuality and personality in the bargain is really baseless as we shall see later.

But who is a Guru, a real Guru? This is a question that needs to be answered because the average man is bewildered by the profusion in which ingots of baser metal tend to crowd out of sight ingots of pure gold. Greesham's Law seems to hold good here also. Again, there are the perplexing phenomena of half-baked teachers producing showy results and multiplying their trade.

In spiritual life a Guru is one who embodies a particular realisation pertaining to the path he has chosen. He has not merely realised but has the competence and the capacity to communicate that realisation to others. The Guru need not always be one who has attained to the highest status in the line; he can very well be one who has established himself and in touch with the Power or Godhead that presides over his path. If he can function as the channel for infusing into others the influence of the Power to which he is open, that is enough. Those that trust him, have faith in him, receive help and guidance from the source-Power whatever the imperfection and failings of the teacher in other respects. For it is not through the ordinary human parts of the Guru that the disciple usually receives help. The part that attracts the soul of the seeker is also the part that functions as the channel or point of contact with the higher Power and Grace and naturally that is the very best of his being. As long as that part is not eclipsed or submerged by others, the disciples continue to benefit by his contact. So much for teachers of the common run.

The ideal Guru, however, is one who has actualised the possibility of spiritual realisation in his own person and, as we said, who can re-create his own realisation or realisations in others. How does he do it? And in whom does he effect the change? In those who throw themselves open to him in trust, in surrender of the inner being. The disciple is aflame with an aspiration to dedicate himself to the Ideal which is embodied for him in the Guru; he has the faith that this Ideal which is there before his eyes realised or in the process of being realised in the person of the Guru can also be rendered in his own being with the help of the former; he offers his will, his strength of personality to the Guru, so that he could mould it and use it for the effectuation of the purpose. In a word, he makes a genuine surrender of his own being, throwing it open exclusively to the constant gaze and work of the Power or the Shakti of the Guru.

The Guru works, as Sri Aurobindo has pointed out, through Teaching, Example and Influence. He has his teaching which is a presentation, in terms understandable to the human mind, of his perception and realisation of the Truth, the means he has used and perfected for its attainment and the procedure to be adopted by those who seek to follow him. It goes without

saying that instructions are laid down only in their broad lines and the Guru varies them in detail to suit the nature and need of each individual soul. His instructions are therefore living directions—a feature which one would miss in the enjoinings of the Shastras.

Apart from the living touch which he imparts to the instructions there is his *example*, the effulgent example of the divine realisation radiating from him. The compelling fact of his high elevated status is a constant reminder and awakener of the flame of aspiration in the disciples to grow into the image of the Master. This living demonstration of the practical possibility of the divine realisation in a human frame, the possibility of living out one's life in all its details from the deeper base of the Spirit, eliminates from sincere aspirants all eventuality of doubt, fear and despair regarding the practicability of the higher life, the life of Truth amidst the thousand imperfections of the earth, and confirms and promotes the godward urge in those around him.

The most dynamic instrument of the Guru, however, is the influence he is able to exercise, the strength of his personality that is radiated. The disciple may or may not have the necessary intellectual equipment to comprehend the teaching of the Master. He may or may not have discrimination enough to profit by the example. But he cannot escape the aura of his Master's influence. Influence here may be described as the impact of the Guru's personality on the being of the disciple. Once the latter is allowed by the Master to come into the orbit of his radiance, the influence is at work. The soul of the seeker is constantly exposed to the warming, elevating and even transforming touch of the sunshine emanating from the being of the Guru. Unripe souls get ready to ripe; ripe souls get ready for fruition. In a significant imagery the whole process has been likened to a ceaseless burning Fire in whose presence logs of wood, in all conditions of dryness, are gathered. Sooner or later, each log drys up, absorbs the heat of the atmosphere and attains the necessary readiness to take up the flame in itself. Wherever there are such Masters of realisation, we find around them devotees and disciples in varying degrees of development—some highly competent to receive the help and make a real success of themselves, but some hopelessly inadequate in their equipment. Yet they are there because of the pressing need of their souls which seek to draw the needed nourishment and hasten their growth in the contributing and sustaining ambience of the Guru's benevolence. For he is really "a Presence pouring the Divine Consciousness and its constituting light and power and purity and bliss in all who are receptive around him" (Sri Aurobindo). The influence is inescapable. It is absorbed by all in some part of their being

or other; it is only a question of degree. The results of the working of the Influence are also inevitable in their appearance; only it is a question of time. Those who have been vigilant, receptive and ready will naturally find in themselves the most glorious manifestations of it; the others will find their period of preparation speeded up.

II

It may be asked, why is the Guru indispensable, why his intercession is invested with such fundamental importance? Is it not possible for one to realise the Divine directly on his own? Why should anybody stand between man and his Maker? The Divine is omnipresent and every one with sincerity and effort should be able to first get into touch with it and then to progressively realise it.

We would not deny the sheer logic of this position.We would not deny either that there have been instances—however rare and singular—where spiritual realisation has been seen possible without a human Guru, as a direct revelation. Such instances have been there, but are rare. They have been so sparse and the circumstances attending them are such as rather indicate some special purpose worked out through special means. Usually the ardent aspirant gets initiated into the realm of the Spirit by one who lives in and for the Divine Reality. That is the tradition of the mystics everywhere; it is, especially in India, a settled question and the established tradition of thousands of years of spiritual history is there not without reason and support to meet the demands of the acutal intricacies of the deeper and mystic life. Indeed, there is a gap felt by the novice, the initiate, at the outset between himself as he is here and the Divinity far above and far in the depths. The gulf between the human soul and the Godhead is so vast as to appear almost unbridgeable. The Guru, in all mystic paths, fills up the hiatus. He has built up in his own person the perfect path which he reveals to those whom he accepts as his disciples; he has called down and holds in himself the Powers of strength, knowledge and illumination necessary for working out the Sadhana and which he ceaselessly pours into the disciple, known or even unknown to him. He is the canalised centre of the Divine especially active for a particular purpose and as such, an embodiment of the Truth of the Path over which he presides. That is why it is said that the Guru is God himself to the disciple.

Again, it is a fact of spiritual experience that initiation, oral or otherwise, is not just a formal affair signifying acceptance by the Guru. Whether it is initiation by means of a Name, of a Mantra or a silent launching of the

being on its career of destiny, the Guru infuses something of himself, some emanation of his own Tapas-shakti into the disciple. And it is this living power of realisation that abides in him as the presence of the Guru, protects him, guides him and helps in the labour by its own strength. This influence of the Guru once received cannot be got rid of easily; it is there present in the being even when it is not overtly active. We recall to our mind the instance of a brilliant product of modern education who had no serious belief in these matters concerning the spiritual and occult sphere. He was however once prevailed upon by friends to take *diksha*, initiation from a Guru of uncommon attainments. The latter gave him a Mantra. But the young man, as he then was, did not pursue the matter; he was not serious about it. Events took him to another shrine. Nearly thirty years later one night when he found himself in a critical situation all help seemed to fail and his heart sank. Suddenly from the depths of his being there arose the very voice in which the Mantra was first communicated to him three decades ago and went on reverberating, infusing fresh strength into him and saw him through. The Guru had left the physical body long ago. No contact had been maintained for years together. Yet the emanation from the Tapaswin was there and in the hour of need gave its succour. It is pertinent to recall here the observation made by Sri Aurobindo, in a different connection, that the influence of the Guru can continue to act even after the close of his earthly career.

Human nature is endless in its variations and even in spiritual life no set uniform course can be laid down. Adjustments, modifications become necessary in keeping with the need and temperament of the nature and this could be only done by the Guru who has complete knowledge both of the path and the competence of the disciple. The Guru has always a fuller and better appreciation of the capacities and needs of the disciple than the latter himself has in his half-lit knowledge. The Guru gives full value to the personality of the disciple, in fact he helps it to grow into its highest potential by rounding off the corners, by opening up avenues of development hitherto lying closed or unsuspected in his being. He takes up the raw ore and transmutes it into a finished bar of gold. It needs not to be added that certain conditions are to be fulfilled by the disciple in order that the Guru may get the needed impulsion and scope to work out the intention. But that is another subject.

M. P. PANDIT

A VISIT TO SRI AUROBINDO ASHRAM

WHEN my trip to India was decided during the summer of 1949 Mother instructed me to make arrangements for staying at Pondicherry from November 20th to December 2nd. I would thus be present for the November Darshan and also for the anniversary of the Ashram school. Soon after my arrival in India, Mother wrote to me and stated that I was to drive with Mahadeolal Dalmia from Madras to Pondicherry and arrive at the Ashram at 5 P.M. on the 21st. She explained that she had all set to be able to spend then a little time alone with me. Mahadeolal and myself were therefore quite perturbed when, due to some delay in getting my papers in order at the Madras police station, we were not able to leave before 2.30 instead of 1 o'clock as was intended. Though the car made quite a good speed and in spite of the courtesy of the Customs officials who had been asked not to delay us, the sun was setting when we arrived at the Ashram. There Pavitra told me that Mother was expecting me at Golconde in the room where I was to live for a few days. It was quite dark when I arrived at Golconde, I hastily climbed two storeys and then, in the dim light of the corridor, I saw a white shape with her back against the door in a very familiar attitude.

Though we had not seen each other since Mother left France in 1915, we were at once in full understanding and I had the strong impression of being still a small boy seeking safety in his mother's lap.

During my trip through India I had often heard the opinion expressed that Sri Aurobindo's Ashram was somewhat of a puzzle as it seemed against all common ideas to combine spiritual life and comfort. This is undoubtedly the Mother's achievement. What strikes first in the Ashram is the perfect harmony of the whole. All details fit together and it is impossible to imagine them fitting so well without the Mother's presence in all of them. Vice versa, the spiritual leadership of Sri Aurobindo through the Mother cannot be imagined without the total surrender of all disciples to the Mother in the most minute details of their life.

This surrender does not, of course, mean the abdication of one's own will, on the contrary, it is the way for each one towards the fulfilment of

his own self, means by which he gets a clearer view of his goal. For any one who would feel disheartened or even only hesitating between different ways, the Mother's blessing is the greatest help.

That the Mother is always present, that she knows everything which happens in the Ashram, every preoccupation of each disciple, is probably the fact most striking to the new comer. Another fact is that anyone who is totally devoted to the Mother very quickly acquires an ability of better understanding and a clearer view of his own aspirations.

It is therefore not surprising to find out that anything which is done or made at the Ashram is pretty near to perfection. Those who have freely chosen to contribute in manual work do it with the will to satisfy the Mother. If they are skilled workers they find out that their skill has improved. If the job is new to them they make it a point to master it thoroughly. All work is done with an evident pleasure and not as a necessary duty. This is also true of the physical education which is now an important part of the Ashram life. The marching which takes place every evening in the Mother's presence and is followed by a concentration brings to all who take part in it a wonderful feeling of physical and mental relaxation. The children too are susceptible to the atmosphere and look strikingly happy.

The various displays which took place on the sixth anniversary of the Ashram school were remarkable achievements. There was nothing amateurish in the theatrical show and the display of physical education was surprisingly athletic if one takes into account the comparatively small number of people who received the training.

The most extraordinary experience which one can get at the Ashram is however the luck of being present at the Darshan. No words can describe the overwhelming impression of benevolence, knowledge and strength which radiates from Sri Aurobindo and the Mother sitting on their thrones. It is not at all surprising that so many people undertake long journeys in order to have the privilege of paying their tribute of devotion. What they get in return is a glimpse of a higher and truer life which responds to the most innate aspiration of human nature.

ANDRÉ

REVIEWS

(I)

A Critique of Logical Positivism. *By C. E. M. Joad. Gollancz.* 10s. 6d.

Those interested in the currents and cross-currents of modern thought cannot forget the peal of the lance-breaking that raged in the columns of 'The New Statesman and Nation' in 1948.

Dr. Joad is understandably distressed over the premium that Logical Positivism puts upon the increasing lack of faith in moral standards.

Logical Positivism denies all objective existence to moral codes of conduct and reduces all our recoil from and abhorrence of Evil to certain sensations in our nervous mentality and, refuses to invest them with any existence in themselves apart from the persons experiencing those sensations.

The sterile controversy about the thing in itself in Metaphysics that dragged Philosophy into the Serbonian bog of Epistemology has after all stolen into the realm of Ethics also, to undermine the whole fabric of the moral order that held together the tottering world of Christendom.

The book is in fact a criticism of Professor Ayer's "Language, Truth and Logic". Dr Joad was evidently moved to the attack by the remark of an anonymous journalist in 'The New Statesman and Nation' that "Language, Truth and Logic" had 'almost the status of a Bible' among undergraduates in the Oxford University.

The whole problem boils down to this: Have ethical values any objective reality or not? The standpoint of Logical Positivism has been thus crystallised by Dr. Joad, "Propositions about Ethics and Aesthetics, as, for example, 'patience is a virtue', 'murder is wrong', 'this ought to be done', 'this is beautiful', 'Beethoven's music is greater than Gershion's', 'Shakespeare's plays are better than Coward's', do not make any statements about the 'objects' to which they purport to refer, about 'patience', 'murder', or 'Beethoven' or 'Shakespeare'; they simply express or ejaculate an emotion felt by the person making the statement. And since Logical Positivism admits only the sensory experience as true, so "statements whose truth presupposes the presence in the universe of non-sensory factors, as, for

example, standards of moral worth by which people's conduct can be measured or assessed are meaningless statements".

Indeed if such a philosophy holds the limelight, then the bottom is knocked out of all struggle for a righteous cause, the moral fabric which is already rather ramshackle is bound to come down with a crash.

In India we are familiar with the symbolism of sea-churning. Always when there is a great clash and flash between two ideologies, some new Light manifests and strips the old ones of their significance.

Our reading of the present crisis is that the age of Reason has run to seed and men like Dr Joad are merely flogging the dead horse in trying to resuscitate the age that is passing. The need of the hour is not a barren warfare on the plane of mind but the search and aspiration for a higher and fuller illumination. If the darkness encompassing us is densest then the call also is

> Out, out with the mind and its candle-flares,
> Light, light the suns that never die.[1]

The light that is Reason has proved a flickering taper unable to cope with the nether mysteries of life. Is not man's mind the 'dupe of his animal self'? David Hume remarked, "When reason is against a man, the man will soon be against reason". Nietzsche exposes with a still more thoroughness and his characteristic outspokenness the so-called colourless light of Reason. "Philosophers all pose as though their real opinions had been discovered through the self-evolving of a cold, pure, divinely indifferent dialectic; whereas, in fact, a prejudiced proposition, idea, or suggestion which is generally their heart's desire abstracted and defined, is defended by them with arguments sought after the event". And has not Bradley prefaced his *magnum opus* 'Appearance and Reality' with the confession, "Metaphysics is the finding of bad reasons for what we believe upon instinct"? Dr Joad's efforts are bound to end in smoke because without the light of Reason he feels himself rudderless. He writes rather pathetically, "Sap the foundations of rational belief in God—as logical positivism cannot help but do—and you sow the seeds of intolerance and dogmatism". It is a rather ludicrous statement and Dr. Joad cannot substantiate it with historical data. Were Christ and other spiritual leaders rational thinkers weaving their way through labyrinthine speculations and displaying sleights-o'mind and logical prestidigitations? If such had been the case then academicians and not fishermen would have responded to the gospel of Christ. The fact is rather that great

[1] Musa Spiritus in *Poems Past and Present* by Sri Aurobindo.

spiritual figures always clearly saw the limitations of Reason and arrived "at the perception that Reason is only a messenger, a representative or a shadow of a greater consciousness beyond itself which does not need to reason because it is all and knows all that it is."[1] Reason has run its gamut and the time is ripe, 'to convert our twilit or physical mentality into the plenary supramental illumination'

> For only the unborn spirit's timeless power
> Can lift the yoke imposed by birth in time.[2]

Let us revert to the main thesis of the book. Logical Positivists contend that all moral values have their origin in intuition, and therefore they differ with time, place and person. If this be true, then the diabolical values for which the Nazis stood have as good a claim to be accepted as any other and as Dr. Joad suggests all moral scruples will tend to be dismissed as survivals from a guilt-ridden childhood, or as mere rationalisations of the impulse to blame. The following three judgments form the corner-stone of the moral structure in society viz. (i) "That some human characters and some courses of action are really better than others; (ii) that good cannot be equated with what any person or body of persons happens to approve of, and (iii) that our duty ought to be performed, however disagreeable it may happen to be. If you hold that these conclusions are irrational, you are less likely to do your duty and more likely to equate good with what you happen to desire". (Joad) Dr. Joad's conclusion clearly proves that mind cannot always remain the master of the house and at times it allows itself to be clouded by the lower vital forces. Dr. Joad seeks a remedy in external imposition, but a moral order based on such uncertain foundations is also not earthquake proof. Man must sink the foundations of his conduct deeper and firmer. There is in him the Divine spark and man should invoke it to "pierce all veils and manifest in us the things of the Godhead."

Our approach to the whole problem is different. We do not believe in the trenchant distinction between the subjective and the objective order of Reality. This distinction springs purely from the mental way of looking at things. It is a matter of common experience that man can dissociate himself from everything that goes by the name of subjective and stand back and watch it as objectively as any material object. This is why the Indian psychologists went so far as to reduce the subject to a mere witness, pure con-

[1] *The Life Divine*, Vol. I.

[2] *Savitri*, Book I, Canto II.

sciousness devoid of any content, Shuddha Chaitanya, and all else as object. "Mind", as Sri Aurobindo points out, "is an instrument of analysis and synthesis, but not of essential knowledge. Its function is to cut out something vaguely from the unknown Thing in itself and call this measurement or delimitation of the whole, and again to analyse the whole into its parts which it regards as separate mental objects. It is only the parts and accidents that the Mind can see definitely and, after its fashion, know. Of the whole its only definite idea is an assemblage of parts or a totality of properties and accidents. The whole not seen as a part of something else or in its parts, properties and accidents is to the mind no more than a vague perception; only when it is analysed and put by itself as a separate constituted object, a totality in a larger totality, can Mind say to itself, "This now I know". And really it does not know. It knows only its own analysis of the object and the idea it has formed of it by a synthesis of the separate parts and properties that it has seen. There its characteristic power, its function ceases, and if we would have a greater, a profounder and a real knowledge, —a knowledge and not an intense but formless sentiment such as comes sometimes to certain deep but inarticulate parts of our mentality,—Mind has to make room for another consciousness which will fulfil Mind by transcending it or reverse and so rectify its operations after leaping beyond it: the summit of mental knowledge is only a vaulting-board from which that leap can be taken. The utmost mission of Mind is to train our obscure consciousness which has emerged out of the dark prison of Matter, to enlighten its blind instincts, random intuitions, vague perceptions till it shall become capable of this greater light and this higher ascension. Mind is a passage, not a culmination."[1]

We believe that the Divine Being immanent in the universe is evolving itself and Sachchidananda reveals new values when it unfolds a new status of consciousness. Human beings also represent different stages of evolution. On the lowest rung is the physical man and for him material values are the highest, nay, the only real values. For him all idealism is moonshine because philosophy bakes no bread.

The next is the vital man who seeks self aggrandisement, is ambitious and casts away all creature comforts to live dangerously and victoriously. For him ambition, conquest, offence are the highest values. Spengler writes, "Happiness and greatness are incompatible. Those who live for comforts merely do not deserve to exist". Man, he proudly says, is a beast of prey. If the labour-class springs to its feet when the communist promises it a

[1] *The Life Divine*, Vol. I.

life of physical comfors, then the warrior class jumps at the call of a Hitler. Then there are those who have evolved the mental principle and for them 'life's time's fool' and they have no use for these transitory glories. "Immortal mind craves for objects that endure" as Wordsworth said. With each rung on the ladder of evolution new values and ideologies strike a responsive chord among those who do not choose to stagnate but progress further and further. This is why all cannot shriek and clasp their hands in ecstasy like Shelley at the vision of the Intellectual Beauty, as all have not evolved so far. It was a great truth that sought utterance through Wordsworth when he said that every great poet creates his own taste. Not that the poet is unrelated to his age, but because the age is ripe for a new light and the poet of the age is the spark that kindles the blaze.

Dr. Joad, in order to prove that moral values have an objective existence, once wrote that nobody believes that cruelty to animals is a good thing. In the first instance it is hardly true for the memory of Nazi brutalities and the cult that supported them is still green in our minds and secondly it cannot be said of all times which clearly shows that in its evolutionary march humanity has outgrown certain barbaric institutions.

Dr. Joad lays too much stress on external imposition of moral standards, but he is oblivious of the fact that all external imposition dries up the springs of the heart and reduces all morality into something purely conventional. Moral teaching should have more to do with the heart than with the head.

R. K.

II

History of India, Part I, Ancient India. *By K. A. M. Sastri.* Published by S. Viswanathan, Madras.

There have been so many histories of Ancient India written before this, and a good many of them by eminent historians, that we expect to see something truly novel in a new book that comes before us, some fresh facts, a fresh angle of vision or a more lucid presentation than heretofore. Professor Sastri is a scholar of high repute, and has been connected with the teaching of history for a long number of years. He has amply justified himself in the book under review. We have had evidence before now of his profound erudition and his skill in marshalling facts. Both have come into full play here and produced an eminently readable book for the ordinary reader.

The history of Ancient India is a very complicated thing, and it is quite easy for an author to lose himself in the bewildering maze of facts and

events spread over long centuries—the rise and fall of many dynasties, the diverse trend of cultures, the coming and going of a number of spiritual teachers and the many-sided evolution of collective life. Our author has not lost himself anywhere. He is as completely at home in his short study of the Vedic civilisation, as he is in his sketch of the Jain and Buddhist cultures or in his study of the Maurya and Gupta periods or in his presentation of the glorious epoch of the Chola Mahamandal. These are big things which stand forth clearly before any student of Ancient Indian history. But Mr. Sastri has not forgotten even lesser things like the Lingayat cult or the dead cultures of Mohenjodero and Harappa. One noticeable feature of the book is that the history of Dravidian India has received more attention than has been usual so far in popular books on Indian history. This is, as it should be. For it is ridiculous that an Indian student of the day should learn the history of his fatherland without hearing of Parantaka II and the marvellous constitution of his Mahamandal or the glorious achievements of the Pallava and Andhra kingdoms. There is only one thing to be said on the point. History knows of no unit called South India. It is a purely geographical expression. There are no common features political, cultural, racial or temperamental that mark or bring together under one head the Chola, the Andhra, the Chalukya and the Kalinga people. The inhabitants of Kalinga look upon themselves as a more or less pure Aryan people. The Andhras have always looked northward for alliances and extensions. The Rashtrakuta cut such a great figure in later history, because he combined in himself the blood and culture and temperament of the Aryan with the blood and culture and temperament of the Dravidian proper. What were the old rulers of Devagiri, or Lakhaji Jadhav of Ahmednagar, or the Sawants and Angrias and Mores and Jedhes of the Konkan and the Ghat-Matha?—Dravidians? They never thought so. However, let it pass. It is a small matter.

The section on the geography of India, short as it is, contains all that a student of history need know. The setting in which a people have evolved has deeply affected their character and habits and their future history, even more than their racial origin. This we have seen often in the history of the world. The climatic and topographical diversity of the Indian subcontinent is largely responsible for the varied temperament of the Indian people. This would account for the difference between the Dravidian Brahuis of the Dadu hills and the Dravidian villager of, say, the Godavari valley,—the difference between the Rajput of the desert states of Rajputnaa and the Rajput settled in fertile Bengal—between the Bedouin of Riad and Nejed with the opulent Arab merchant of Baghdad. Racial

characteristics are there always, but they are very often overridden by the environmental influences.

There is nothing wrong with Professor Sastri's historical perspective. His division of Indian history into three parts,—The First, the ancient period ending with the advent of Islam (or more properly, the advent of the Afghans); the second, the Moslem period ending with the death of Aurangzeb; the last, the period of the struggle for the suzerainty of India culminating in the establishment of British rule—is rational, as far as political history goes. But there is in all true history something very much more important than a mere sequence of political events. The succession of one king after another, of one dynasty after another, with appropriate dates, is useful enough as a framework of history. But the real thing is the evolution of the group-soul of a people. This evolution is visible in the development of their society, in the conception of their State. The ancient Hindu State had a definite character of its own, with its village republics and its city-guilds, and the King coordinating them all. When the exigencies of politics brought into existence the large empires, the state lost its old character and tended to become more and more centralised. Our author is fully conscious of all this, and has certainly written his history from the broader point of view.

Professor Sastri joins issue with those who argue that the Indian has no historic sense and that there is a dire lack of historic material in this country. The argument is on the face of it is absurd. India is peculiarly rich in folk-lore, rich in ancient epic poetry, rich in more modern ballads and chronicles, not to speak of such books as Rajatarangini, Ramcharitra and Harshacharitra. Some of the ballads, long and short, have been sung far and wide, for centuries. Side by side with these writings, there are accounts written, from time to time, by foreign visitors like Fa Hien, Hiuen Sang, Megasthenes, Ibn Batuta, Alberuni and Abbe Dubois—mostly authentic and reliable. The evidence of archaeology, likewise, is elaborate and includes extremely valuable inscriptions. The learned author has gone over all this, but so deep is his knowledge, that at places he has overcrowded the canvas, and thereby sacrificed lucidity to some extent. But this, too, is a rare occurrence. Generally speaking, he has kept his main theme clear and conspicuous. As we have noted already, the principal thing in history is the unfolding of the group-soul. The group-soul of India is one and indivisible. One and indivisible has ever been her evolution from the higher, the inner point of view. But, outwardly, the mighty flood of her life has been enriched throughout its course by the inflow of a number of side-streams,—small and great. The historian has to take all these into

consideration, but he must never lose sight of the fact that tributaries are not independent channels, but mere feeders of the great river. There are, all over India, curious groups of people, small in number, talking dialects of their own, and marked by peculiar features and colouring. All over Konkan and Sindh, we have met quite a number of light-skinned, fair-haired, blue eyed individuals. They belong mostly to the higher castes. What do these traits indicate? Persian blood, Jewish blood, Greek blood, Arab blood? Then again, we came across a tribe of people in Upper Sindh who call themselves Jutts. They are a tall people with an almost European complexion, chestnut hair and light brown eyes, and speak a dialect called Juttki which has apparently nothing in common with either Brahui or Baluch. They are not a primitive survival like the Ho's of Orissa or the Buno's of central Bengal. The occupation of the Jutt—camel breeding and camel-driving—seems to suggest a Bactrian descent. The name is probably the same as the old Getae. The Minas of Rajputana are unknown to history. They have never been valiant soldiers and have never had a principality of their own. But they are a numerous tribe, belonging to the neighbourhood of Ajmere, who have for some generations past maintained themselves by systematic burglary. They have a very clever cooperative organisation of their own. They are a handsome and remarkably intelligent people. Who are these Mina-Bauris? Aryan, Dravidian, Kolarian or what, in origin? They are Indians certainly, all of them. I am mentioning these little facts to indicate the nature of the labyrinth in which the student of Indian history might get stuck if he does not look out.

The book under review, for the range of matter dealt with, is quite short, only about three hundred pages long. It is apparently written for the general reader, and possibly, for the university student, and is quite a good book as far as that goes. There are, altogether, eight chapters. The first is introductory; the others relate to Vedic civilisation, Jainism and Buddhism, The Maurya Age, India from 300 B.C. to 300 A.D., The Gupta Age, Northern India from 550 to 1200 A.D. and Southern India from 550 to 1300 A.D. respectively. There are several maps, all clearly drawn and very useful, and the usual genealogical trees.

The learned professor has apparently made a special study of temple architecture, and quite a lot of interesting and instructive information has been crammed into the three hundred pages of the book. But, as has been noted above, the canvas is over-crowded at places, and too hurried at others. We looked for a description of the Orissa temples—Puri, Bhuvaneshwar and Konarak—and found them just catalogued, as it were. This must be due to want of space. We have not attempted here a more

detailed consideration of the purely historical portion of the book. For, after all, this is only the first part of the whole work. Still, this much can be safely said that no part of the history of ancient India has been unduly condensed. Asoka and Samudragupta and Harsha and Parantaka have received equal attention. Taken all in all, it is a very good book that we have the privilege, here, of reviewing.

C. C. DUTT

"THE SYNTHESIS OF YOGA"

BY SRI AUROBINDO

" Integral Yoga ordinarily means a synthesis of the systems of Yoga—mainly Jnana, Bhakti and Karma as is known in our country. But it is no philosophical or academic synthesis that is aimed at. It is going to the heart of the thing by a recourse to the Divine and Divine alone."

★

(*Appeared in the "Hindu" dated 15-8-49*)

Price Rs. 7-8-0

SRI AUROBINDO LIBRARY, 369 Esplanade, Madras

LATEST ASHRAM PUBLICATIONS

	Rs. as.
THE HUMAN CYCLE Traces the evolution of human society from its beginnings and indicates its future line of advance.	7—8
THE IDEAL OF HUMAN UNITY With a postscript chapter now added in book-form to the series of essays published in the *Arya*, 1915.	7—0
SAVITRI: *A Legend and a Symbol.* Part One, comprising Books (I-III) in one volume. Extensively revised.	
Ordinary	8—0
With autograph	10—0

Can be had from:—

SRI AUROBINDO ASHRAM, PONDICHERRY (FR. INDIA)
SRI AUROBINDO LIBRARY, 369 ESPLANADE, MADRAS

Books by Sri T. V. Kapali Sastri

1. **Lights on the Veda** . . . . . **Re. 1/4**
2. **Lights on the Upanishads** . . . . **Re. 2/-**
3. **Sri Aurobindo: Lights on Teachings** . . **Rs. 2/8**
4. **Kavithanjali** : . . . . . : **Re. 1/-**
5. **Lights on the Fundamentals** . . . (In the Press)

Can be had from the publishers:—

SRI AUROBINDO LIBRARY

369, Esplanade : : Madras 1.

Books by Sri Sisirkumar Mitra

SRI AUROBINDO: A HOMAGE

Price Re. 1-0

With a Foreword by Dr. Tan Yun-Shan. New revised edition and enlarged by the inclusion of a new subject: *Sri Aurobindo and the Future World-Order.*

SRI AUROBINDO AND INDIAN FREEDOM

Price Rs. 1-8

(With the Mother's and Sri Aurobindo's massages on Indian Freedom)

"The book is a noble and inspiring one. It deserves to be read not only for the light it throws on the past of India's struggle for freedom but also for its prophetic vision of the India of the future as revealed by Sri Aurobindo.... —*The Hindu.*

."A splendid exposition." —*Amrita Bazar Patrika*

Other works of the author:

INDIA'S CULTURAL EMPIRE AND HER FUTURE **Rs. 2-4**

THE VISION OF INDIA **Rs. 3-0**

CULTURAL FELLOWSHIP OF BENGAL **Rs. 2-4**

Sri Aurobindo Library, 369 Esplanade, Madras 1

RIG VEDA BHASHYA

ENTITLED

SIDDHANJANA

(Commentary on the Rig Veda in accord with Sri Aurobindo's approach)

By Sri T. V. KAPALI SASTRY

The first part of Volume I of this work is ready and is supplied to those who subscribe for the Volume by remitting Rs. 35/- which is the concessional rate offered to subscribers. The second part of the Volume is in the press and it will take time to be ready.

The first part contains the Introduction and Commentary with Text from the 1st to 32nd Sukta and the Second part from 33rd to 121st Sukta.

Can be had from :

Sri M. P. Pandit, Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry
Sri Aurobindo Library, 369. Esplanade, Madras I

"THE ADVENT"

Complete bound sets for the years '46, '47, '48 & '49 are available. Price Rs. 7/8 each

Postage Free

Please write to:—

SRI AUROBINDO LIBRARY

369 Esplanade

MADRAS

Published by P. Counouma
Printed at the Sri Aurobindo Ashram Press, Pondicherry
To be had of:
Sri Aurobindo Library, 369, Esplanade, Madras

656/9/50/1,200